INITIAL STUDY/ PROPOSED MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION: NORTH SLOPE SONOMA MOUNTAIN RIDGE TRAIL PROJECT

March 1, 2008

Prepared For:

Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District
747 Mendocino Avenue, Suite 100
Santa Rosa, CA 95401

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In Association With:

LandPeople
TOVA Applied Science & Technology
Holman & Associates
Whitlock and Weinberger Transportation, Inc.

Exhibit 4: Mitigated Negative Declaration

North Slope Sonoma Mountain Ridge Trail Project
Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration

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California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Environmental Checklist Form

1. Project Title:

North Slope Sonoma Mountain Ridge Trail Project

2. Lead Agency Name and Address:

Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District
747 Mendocino Avenue, Suite 100
Santa Rosa, CA 95401

3. Responsible Agencies

Sonoma County Regional Parks Department
California State Department of Parks and Recreation

4. Contact Person and Phone Number:

Kim Batchelder
Natural Resources Planner
Sonoma County Agricultural
Preservation and Open Space District
(707) 565-7360

5. Project Location:

The proposed 4.25-mile North Slope Sonoma Mountain Ridge Trail would be located on the north slope of Sonoma Mountain in southwestern Sonoma County, and would connect Jack London State Historic Park (JLSHP) on the east and the Jacobs Ranch on the west, by traversing six properties: Jacobs Ranch, Cooper's Grove, Sonoma Mountain Woodlands, Wilroth, Skiles Ranch (fee portion), and JLHSP, as shown on Figure 1: Trail Corridor and Project Location. There are two potential alternative alignments for a segment of the western portion of the trail, one of which would pass through a seventh property owned by Sonoma State University.

6. Project Sponsor's Name and Address:

Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District
747 Mendocino Avenue, Suite 100
Santa Rosa, CA 95401

7. General Plan Designation:

Jacobs Ranch property: Resources and Rural Development (RRD/WA – 40 acre density)
Cooper's Grove property (northern portion): Diverse Agriculture (DA – 20 acre density)
Cooper's Grove property (southern portion): Resources and Rural Development (RRD – 40 acre density)

Sonoma Mountain Woodlands property: Resources and Rural Development (RRD – 40 acre density)
Wilroth property: Resources and Rural Development (RRD – 40 acre density)
Skiles Ranch property (fee portion): Resources and Rural Development (RRD – 100 acre density)
Jack London State Historic Park: Public/Quasi Public
Sonoma State University property: Resources and Rural Development (RRD – 40 acre density)

8. Zoning:

Jacobs Ranch property: Resources and Rural Development in Williamson Act (RRD/WA)
Cooper's Grove property (northern portion): Diverse Agriculture (DA)
Cooper's Grove property (southern portion): Resources and Rural Development (RRD)
Sonoma Mountain Woodlands property: Resources and Rural Development (RRD)
Wilroth property: Resources and Rural Development (RRD)
Skiles Ranch property (fee portion): Resources and Rural Development (RRD)
Jack London State Historic Park: Public Facilities (PF)
Sonoma State University property: Resources and Rural Development (RRD)

9. Description of Project:

Project Site

The seven properties comprising the project site, and their size and Assessor's Parcel Numbers (APNs), are listed below.

1. Jacobs Ranch (168 acres, APN 049-030-097)
2. Cooper's Grove (226 acres, APN 055-130-009)
3. Sonoma Mountain Woodlands (84 acres, APN 055-121-018)
4. Wilroth (11 acres, APN 136-190-014)
5. Skiles Ranch (fee portion) (47 acres, APN 136-190-013)
6. Jack London State Historic Park (approximately 800 acres, APN 136-190-004)
7. (Potentially) Fairfield Osborn Preserve – Sonoma State University (405 acres, APN 136-201-048)

The Jacobs Ranch, Cooper's Grove, Wilroth, and Skiles Ranch (fee portion) properties are owned by the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District. The Sonoma Mountain Woodlands property is owned by the Sonoma County Regional Parks Department, and Jack London State Historic Park is owned by California State Parks. The Jacobs Ranch property, a former ranch, contains a private rural driveway/ranch road (which also serves an adjacent residential property to the west), a main house, a ranch house, two barns, an equipment shed, and various pastures. The majority of the Cooper's Grove property is undeveloped, but it contains four private inholdings, of which two contain residences and a third contains a residence under development. The Sonoma Mountain Woodlands, Wilroth, and Skiles Ranch properties are undeveloped with the exception of a water collection system and are serviced by an access road within the Skiles Ranch property. The western portion of Jack London State Historic Park contains the easternmost portion of the proposed trail; the Park's access and parking facilities are located further east.

The project properties listed above (excluding Jack London State Historic Park and the Sonoma State University property discussed below) comprise a total of 536 acres.

The proposed project includes two alternative trail alignments (see Introduction and Overview, below). One of these alignments would pass between the Wilroth and Skiles Ranch properties via a small portion of a seventh property owned by Sonoma State University. This property (APN 136-201-048) is unimproved, forms part of the Fairfield Osborn Preserve owned, and is managed by Sonoma State University.

Introduction and Overview

The proposed North Slope Sonoma Mountain Ridge Trail (NSSMRT) Project would consist of a 4.25-mile trail on the north slope of Sonoma Mountain in southeastern Sonoma County, connecting on the east with Jack London State Historic Park (JLSHP), and on the west with a new public parking/trail staging area[1] at Jacobs Ranch, including improvements to the existing driveway that provides access to Sonoma Mountain Road. The location of the proposed project, which includes two alternative routes through a segment of the central portion of the project site, as well as two trail spurs, is shown in Figure 1: Trail Corridor and Project Location. Figure 2: Public Access Overview shows the proposed access facilities and trailhead at the western terminus of the trail at Jacobs Ranch, and Figure 3: Staging Area shows detailed designs for the staging area and trailhead at Jacobs Ranch. The proposed trail, which would comprise a segment of the regional Bay Area Ridge Trail, would connect to the existing dedicated Ridge Trail ("Hayfields Trail") in the northwestern region of JLSHP, cross the western boundary of JLSHP, traverse the other five or six properties identified above, and terminate at the staging area on the west at Jacobs Ranch. The trail would include three or four pedestrian bridges, 11 or 12 wet creek crossings, approximately 13 switchbacks and climbing turns, and the formal trailhead and access facilities at Jacobs Ranch mentioned above. The Jacobs Ranch trailhead is 1,030 feet above sea level and the trail route climbs to 2,200 feet above sea level on the Skiles Ranch property. In addition to the main trail corridor, spur trails would provide scenic vistas of Bennett Valley and northern Sonoma County, and access to the redwood grove on the Cooper's Grove property. The components of the project are described below.

Trail Design

The North Slope Sonoma Mountain Ridge Trail would be designed to multi-use standards to accommodate hikers, equestrians, and mountain bicyclists. The trail tread would be four feet wide. Pullouts, up to six feet in width, would be installed in areas where line-of-sight is poor, to allow users to pass each other safely. The tread would be constructed with a one to three percent outslope (in the same direction as the terrain being crossed) to allow for drainage. The upslope would be sloped back to prevent cracking and erosion from uphill surface water, and the downslope would be raked out to allow accelerated revegetation. Rolling water dips and reverse grades would be installed at appropriate locations to remove surface water from the trail. Vegetation would be cut back to allow a ten-foot ceiling and eight-foot width throughout the trail corridor to accommodate equestrian and cyclist use. The trail alignment was planned to avoid impacts to wetlands.

Sutter walls (a type of retaining wall) would be used as the primary retaining walls at sites where the outslope would not permit a stable trail tread. Sutter walls would not exceed four feet in height with the exception of locations near bridge abutments. Rock walls would be constructed with native material.

[1] A "staging area" encompasses a parking area, restroom(s), information sign(s), and related features.

Trail Bridges and Creek Crossings

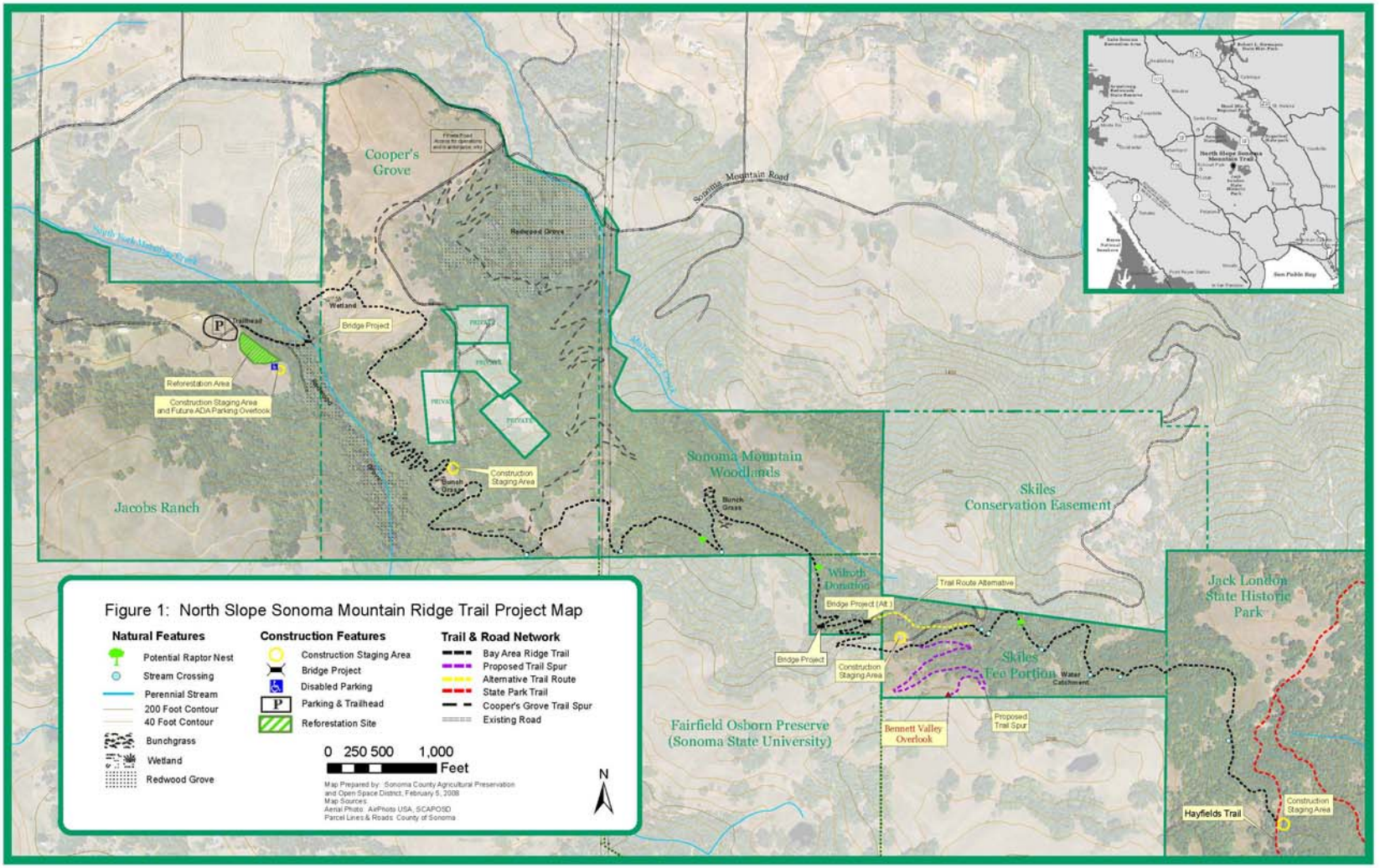
The trail would include 15 or 16 creek crossings of which three would require new bridges, as shown in Figure 1: Trail Corridor and Project Location: (1) a 35-foot bridge at the South Fork Matanzas Creek; (2) a 20-foot bridge in the southwestern part of the Wilroth Property; and, (3) a 20-foot bridge crossing a small tributary on the northern portion of Cooper's Grove property. In addition, the alternative route in the central portion of the project site that would be located exclusively within the Wilroth property before passing into the Skiles property (rather than passing through a portion of Sonoma State University's Fairfield Osborn Preserve) would include a fourth bridge crossing: a 35- to 40-foot bridge in the southeastern part of the Wilroth property. The internal trail bridges would be constructed primarily of fiberglass to accommodate the steep terrain and access for large equipment to the remote sections of trail. These bridges would be designed to handle a maximum load of 10,000 lbs. The first bridge project coming from Jacobs Ranch trailhead would be a more traditional pedestrian bridge where large equipment can access the site and place the structure comfortably on its abutments. The bridges would be set on concrete abutments, with heights sufficient to allow the 100-year flood event in the stream channel. (In addition to the three or four new bridges along the trail, the existing bridge on the driveway at Jacobs Ranch would be replaced, as discussed in Driveway Bridge, below.)

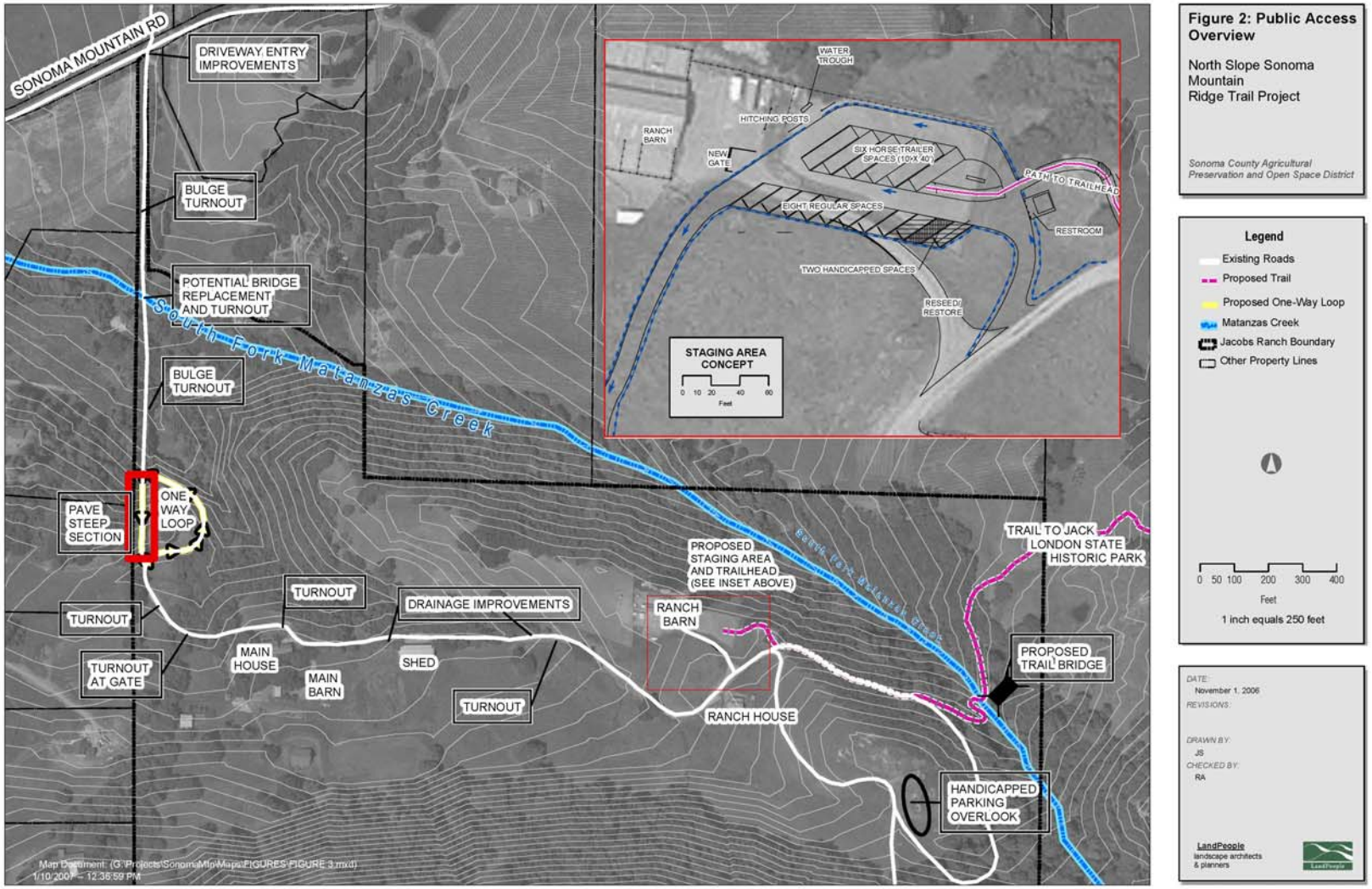
The other 11 crossings would be located at seasonal streams where the topography of the stream corridor allows a gentle approach and exit into the stream channel. The wet crossings would be constructed of native rock, and would include inlets and energy dissipaters, to line the stream channel but not impede flow. In addition to these 11 wet rock crossings, the Cooper's Grove spur trail, if implemented (see Trail Spurs, below) would contain one additional wet rock crossing.

Switchbacks

The Cooper's Grove area contains unstable soils with a high propensity for slumping, and the trail elevation rises from approximately 1,070 feet to approximately 1,725 feet as it enters onto the Sonoma Mountain Woodlands property. To avoid the undulating soils, accomplish the elevation gain, and maintain a seven to ten percent grade, a series of approximately 11 switchbacks would be constructed on the west corridor of Cooper's Grove between the privately held in-holdings and east of the South Fork Matanzas Creek. Because of the steepness of the slopes along this section of terrain, sutter walls would be required to support many of the corners of the switchbacks and to protect tree root balls along the trail tread.

For the two alternative routes through the southern portion the Wilroth property, two to four long switchbacks would ascend a steep section of trail before entering the western border of Skiles Ranch. In addition, as described below, two trail spurs servicing the Bennett Valley Overlook and Cooper's redwood grove would require an additional 22 switchbacks and climbing turns in order to maintain a seven to ten percent trail grade.


Cooper's Grove
Sonoma Mountain Road
Redwood Grove
Wetland
Bridge Project
Trailhead
Reforestation Area
Construction Staging Area and Future ADA Parking Overlook
PRIVATE
Construction Staging Area
Bunch Grass
Jacobs Ranch
Sonoma Mountain Woodlands
Skiles Conservation Easement
Wilroth Donation
Trail Route Alternative
Bridge Project (Alt.)
Bridge Project
Construction Staging Area
Skiles Fee Portion
Water Catchment
Proposed Trail Spur
Bennett Valley Overlook
Fairfield Osborn Preserve (Sonoma State University)
Jack London State Historic Park
Hayfields Trail
Construction Staging Area
Figure 1: North Slope Sonoma Mountain Ridge Trail Project Map
Natural Features
Potential Raptor Nest
Stream Crossing
Perennial Stream
200 Foot Contour
40 Foot Contour
Bunchgrass
Wetland
Redwood Grove
Construction Features
Construction Staging Area
Bridge Project
Disabled Parking
Parking & Trailhead
Reforestation Site
Trail & Road Network
Bay Area Ridge Trail
Proposed Trail Spur
Alternative Trail Route
State Park Trail
Cooper's Grove Trail Spur
Existing Road
0 250 500 1,000
Feet
N
Map Prepared by: Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District, February 5, 2008
Map Sources
Aerial Photo: AirPhoto USA, SCAPOSD
Parcel Lines & Roads: County of Sonoma


SONOMA MOUNTAIN RD
DRIVEWAY ENTRY IMPROVEMENTS
BULGE TURNOUT
POTENTIAL BRIDGE REPLACEMENT AND TURNOUT
South Fork Matanzas Creek
BULGE TURNOUT
PAVE STEEP SECTION
ONE WAY LOOP
TURNOUT
TURNOUT
DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENTS
TURNOUT AT GATE
MAIN HOUSE
MAIN BARN
SHED
TURNOUT
PROPOSED STAGING AREA AND TRAILHEAD (SEE INSET ABOVE)
RANCH BARN
RANCH HOUSE
TRAIL TO JACK LONDON STATE HISTORIC PARK
PROPOSED TRAIL BRIDGE
HANDICAPPED PARKING OVERLOOK
WATER TROUGH
HITCHING POSTS
RANCH BARN
NEW GATE
SIX HORSE TRAILER SPACES (10'X 40')
PATH TO TRAILHEAD
EIGHT REGULAR SPACES
RESTROOM
TWO HANDICAPPED SPACES
RESEED/ RESTORE
STAGING AREA CONCEPT
0 10 20 40 60
Feet
Figure 2: Public Access Overview
North Slope Sonoma Mountain Ridge Trail Project
Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District
Legend
Existing Roads
Proposed Trail
Proposed One-Way Loop
Matanzas Creek
Jacobs Ranch Boundary
Other Property Lines
0 50 100 200 300 400
Feet
1 inch equals 250 feet
DATE:
November 1, 2006
REVISIONS:
DRAWN BY:
JS
CHECKED BY:
RA
LandPeople
landscape architects & planners

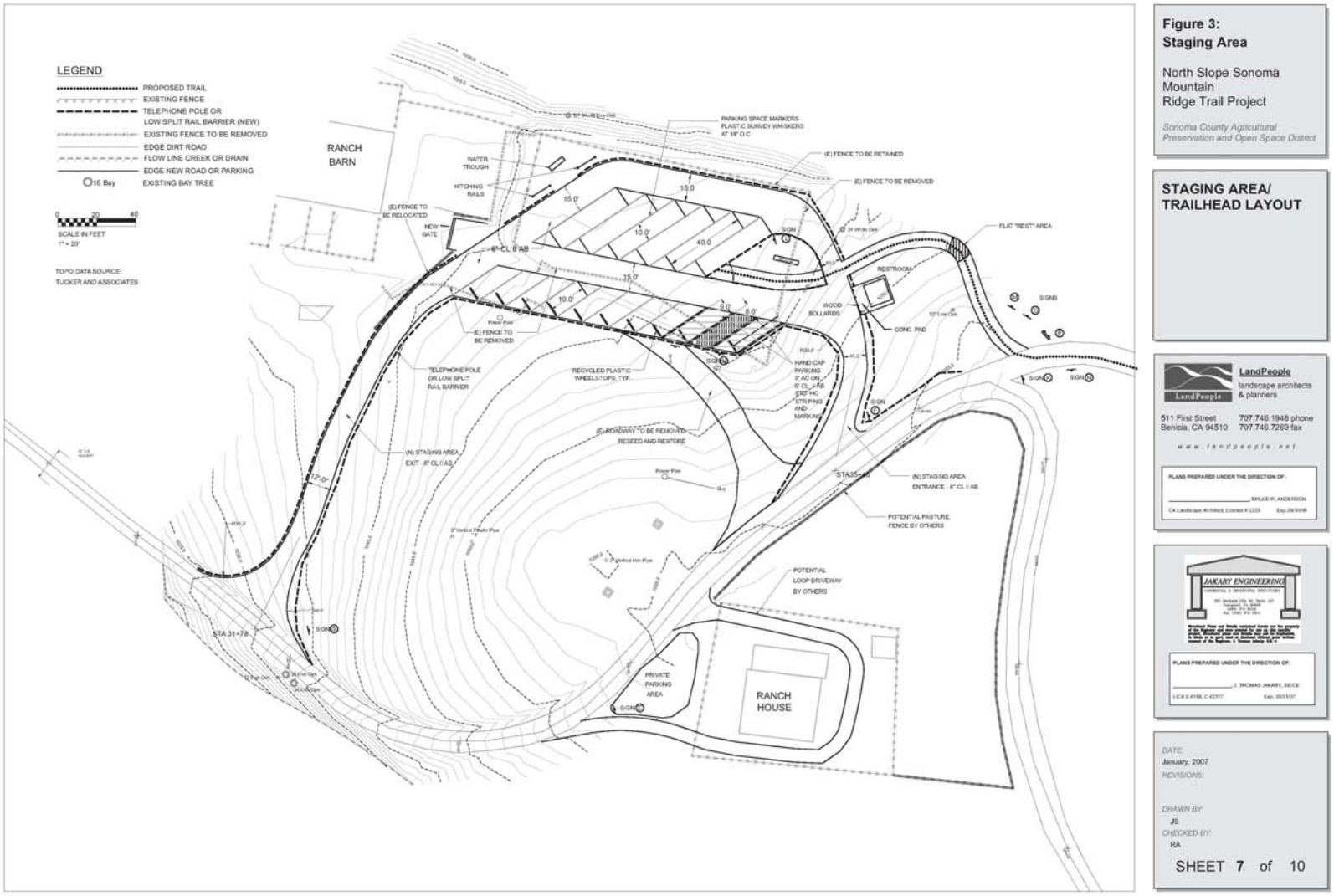


Figure 3:
Staging Area

North Slope Sonoma Mountain
Ridge Trail Project

Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District

STAGING AREA/ TRAILHEAD LAYOUT

LandPeople
landscape architects & planners
511 First Street 707.746.1948 phone
Benicia, CA 94510 707.746.7269 fax
www.landpeople.net
PLANS PREPARED UNDER THE DIRECTION OF:
BRUCE R. ANDERSON
CA Landscape Architect, License # 2225 Exp. 08/31/08

JAKABY ENGINEERING
PLANS PREPARED UNDER THE DIRECTION OF:
J. THOMAS JAKABY, SE/CE
LIC# E 4168, C 42317 Exp. 06/30/07

DATE:
January, 2007
REVISIONS:

DRAWN BY:
JS
CHECKED BY:
RA

SHEET 7 of 10

Trail Spurs

A proposed trail spur would branch off the principal Ridge trail in the western portion of Skiles Ranch and provide access to vistas near the summit of Sonoma Mountain (see Bennett Valley Overlook in Figure 1: Trail Corridor and Project Location). The proposed spur trail corridor would climb across three switchbacks to reach the Bennett Valley Overlook at an elevation of about 2,210 feet. This trail spur would be a deadend segment (users must return to the main trail) with only minimal infrastructure at the end destination point such as hitching posts and benches.

A second trail spur may be constructed in a future phase. This loop trail spur would start from the southern portion of the Cooper's Grove property, and travel north on the east side of the in-holdings as it winds downhill to the Cooper's redwood grove, a well-developed, second growth redwood forest (see Figure 1: Trail Corridor and Project Location). From the redwood grove, the spur trail would travel westward to connect back with the principal Ridge trail near the trailhead at Jacobs Ranch. This spur would have limited additional infrastructure, with no formal staging area or picnic facilities. This spur would include one wet rock crossing and a 20-foot bridge. Also, an additional 19 switchbacks and climbing turns would be constructed to maintain a consistent seven to ten percent trail grade as the spur descends from 1,650 feet to 975 feet in elevation.

Staging Area at Jacobs Ranch

At the western terminus of the proposed trail on the Jacobs Ranch property, the existing corral site would be converted to a parking area, including horse trailer parking (see Figures 2: Public Access Overview and 3: Staging Area). An existing ranch road which loops along the west side of the South Fork Matanzas Creek, extending east from near the staging area, would provide a trail connection to the start of the new Ridge Trail. A new loop access road entering the parking area from the east and exiting from the west would be constructed. To create more gradual grades for access to and from the parking area the corral would be regraded closer to its original contours. The existing corral access road would be restored to grassland.

The parking layout would feature six diagonal pull-through horse trailer parking spaces that could also serve as parking spaces for two conventional vehicles, as well as ten conventional spaces including two handicapped spaces. The parking area would be surfaced with compacted base rock, except for the handicapped spaces, which would be surfaced with asphaltic concrete (AC) pavement. The parking spaces in the base rock area would be delineated by staking plastic survey marker "whiskers" into the parking surface. The parking area and adjacent driveways would be lined with low spit rail border, or closely spaced posts, to prevent vehicles from entering the grassland areas. Hitching rails would be provided at the perimeter of the lot.

A pre-fabricated, single stall, handicapped accessible restroom, of concrete construction over a concrete vault, would be installed at the east side of the lot to serve the public.

The trailhead area connecting to the start of the new trail corridor would be at the east side of the staging area, adjacent to some small oaks that are on the fringe of the dense bay forest going into the Jacobs Ranch redwood grove along the South Fork Matanzas Creek. Signs showing the overall trail route and giving pertinent trail use information (such as trail hazards, restriction to designated trails and use areas, and Sudden Oak Death disease) and regulations would be placed in this area.

Access Driveway to Staging Area

The Staging Area site at the Jacobs Ranch is connected to Sonoma Mountain Road by an existing driveway. At the driveway intersection with Sonoma Mountain Road, the project driveway merges with an adjacent private driveway that is surfaced with gravel. The first 1,000-foot segment of the driveway on the Jacobs Ranch property, which extends to an adjacent residence driveway, is paved, while the remainder consists of dirt with a gravel/base rock overlay. Past the intersection with the driveway to the adjacent private residence, the road continues straight through a cut-bank in a small knoll, while an alternative loop road extends around the knoll to the east. The main ranch driveway curves to the east past the main house and barn of the Jacobs Ranch property, winding gradually uphill to the upper ranch house and barn.

The project proposes that the neighboring driveway apron at Sonoma Mountain Road mentioned above would be paved, white striping would be placed on the Jacobs Ranch driveway entrance to make it more visible, and the limbs of a grove of redwoods and pines to the southwest of the driveway would be pruned. To meet Sonoma County Emergency Services Department standards, a total of seven new turnouts are proposed, in addition to existing turnouts and existing or new intersections that provide turnout opportunities. Turnouts would be eight feet wide by 40 feet long, and may be on one side of the roadway, or "bulge" type, centered or offset from the roadway.

The existing straight and curving bypass segments at the end of the paved driveway would become a one-way loop, with the steep straight section southbound, and the loop section northbound. This steep (approximately 25 percent) straight portion of the driveway would be given a new aggregate base and asphalt concrete (AC) pavement. The material that has sloughed off the cutbank would be removed, and the V-ditch on each side would be cleaned out and be given rock armoring.

The ditches and culverts along the driveway between the main house and the ranch house would receive maintenance as required, and several new or upgraded culverts would be installed. Engineered fill would be placed as a precaution to protect a steep and potentially unstable slope below a portion of the road.

Driveway Bridge

The driveway contains a wooden bridge on concrete abutments that crosses the South Fork Matanzas Creek. The bridge does not meet current building codes, has inadequate railings, and cannot be used to support the necessary loads for fire truck access to the site. The existing concrete abutments may be constricting the flow of Matanzas Creek, a particular concern because there is an intersection of two creek channels at the upstream side of the bridge. As part of the project, the existing bridge and abutments would be removed, and a new longer single span bridge would be constructed on new foundations at each end, to eliminate the constriction of the creek by the existing bridge abutments. The new bridge would consist of a modified railroad flatcar with a wood or concrete deck, and would span approximately 24 to 30 feet.

Group Picnic Area

The upper part of the redwood grove on the east side of the Jacobs Ranch property currently contains five picnic tables, which are in good condition and are proposed to be retained. A nearby wooden outhouse is in deteriorated condition and is proposed to be removed. Numerous park bench seats in an amphitheater-like area of the grove are in poor condition and would be removed.

Access for Persons with Disabilities

From the Jacobs Ranch property, the proposed trail route is in a canyon at the east side of the Jacobs Ranch featuring a grove of second growth redwoods. An existing ranch road which loops along the west side of the South Fork Matanzas Creek, extending east from near the staging area, would provide a trail connection to the start of the new Ridge Trail with a gradient generally below five percent. A segment approximately 150 feet long above the junction with the road that parallels the creek is between seven and eight percent grade, which is still compliant with ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) standards.[2] From the new trailhead at Jacobs Ranch, the North Slope Sonoma Mountain Ridge Trail would be wheelchair accessible for the first one-sixth mile (to the South Fork Matanzas Creek), providing a wheelchair accessible (maximum slope of five percent) roundtrip of one-third mile, to the creek and adjacent redwood grove. Two or three picnic tables would be located in the clearing along this trail, to serve trail users including persons with disabilities. A 5-strand smooth wire fence is proposed to prevent cattle from entering the picnic area. To provide a smooth, firm, stable surface for wheelchair access on this trail segment, a five-foot-wide base rock trail section with a decomposed granite surface would be constructed from the staging area along the ranch road and on the new trail to the bridge. The bridge at the South Fork Matanzas Creek would be the end of the ADA-compliant portion of the trail, as the slope on the east side of the creek has gradients of up to 65 percent and is very wet with a series of intersecting gullies. The steep topography of the remainder of the trail alignment would preclude wheelchair access.

To provide visitors with disabilities with a scenic viewing opportunity comparable to those available to other trail users, a handicapped-only overlook parking spot is proposed at the top of the saddle where the loop road re-enters the valley containing the staging area, ranch house, and barn.

As discussed in Group Picnic Area, above, if and when the group picnic area is formalized for public use, handicapped accessible parking space(s), restroom, and path from the parking area would be installed.

Use and Improvement of Ranch House, Main House, and Barn

The existing ranch house, main house, and home barn on the Jacobs Ranch property, which are in sound condition, would be retained for possible rental, future public use if identified, and/or occupancy by a caretaker. To help screen the ranch house and yard from the public access facilities, the area between the road to the north of the house would be fenced and landscaped with native shrubs and trees. A new pathway would provide access from the house to the barn in place of the existing access road that is proposed to be restored to grassland.

[2] ADA standards for outdoor recreation facilities generally require gradients of five percent or less, or on steeper slopes require level resting platforms at intervals that depend on the steepness of the slope. 8.33 percent is a desirable maximum slope for wheelchair access, though slopes may be steeper where constrained by natural terrain.

The proposed loop road through the parking area could also provide access to the private route around the barn. No ranch house or public parking would be allowed along the access roads.

Trail Users

The trail would be designed as a multi-use trail to accommodate hikers, equestrians, and mountain bicyclists. To allow the trail to cure, high impact users like bikes and horses may be prohibited for the first rainy season, but these user groups would eventually have access to the trail. Map restrictions on the Sonoma Mountain Woodlands property, containing approximately 0.75 miles of the trail, prohibit the use of mountain bikes; however, there are limited options for bypassing this section by cyclists. Because alternatives to allow multiple user groups to use the proposed trail would be explored, this IS/MND evaluates the potential use of mountain bikes on the entire trail, including the Sonoma Mountain Woodlands property. Users would be restricted to designated trails and use areas.

Staging Area Operation

The District intends to contract with the Sonoma County Regional Parks Department for the daily operations and maintenance of the Jacobs Ranch public access and staging area facility. Initially, the Jacobs Ranch staging area is expected to be available for day use only and would be limited to the number of vehicles the staging area can support.

Ultimately, when all management arrangements are in place, the facility would be open from dawn to dusk 365 days per year, unless special conditions such as high fire danger or activities or work on the ranch necessitate closure. No fires would be allowed in the picnic areas except barbeques by special arrangement in conjunction with public events. No smoking would be allowed in any of the public areas.

As per District policy prohibiting dogs on Open Space Preserve lands, dogs would not be permitted on the trail corridor. This policy is consistent with the dog restrictions within Jack London State Historic Park and the Fairfield Osborn Preserve. Other typical open space preserve rules regarding protection of native plants and animals, staying on designated trail, and respecting private property would be posted.

Construction Methods, Fire Safety and Erosion Control

The access facilities at Jacobs Ranch would be constructed with conventional mechanized construction equipment, which would access the site from Sonoma Mountain Road and the existing ranch driveway.

The majority of the trail would be constructed with mechanized equipment, although numerous portions would be constructed by hand, including the three or four bridges, rock walls, creek crossings, sutter walls, brushing, and tree work. Mechanized equipment would include small excavators (diesel-powered), a 'SWECO' Trail Dozer (diesel), Poinjar rock hammer (powered by a gas mix), Honda power carriers (gas), Cobra rock drills (gas mix), trail motorcycles (gas mix), chain saws (gas mix), and ATVs (all-terrain vehicles) to transport equipment to the project site.

All equipment and tools for trail construction would be brought in through four construction staging areas, located at Jacobs Ranch, Cooper's Grove, Skiles Ranch, and Jack London State Historic Park (see Figure 1: Trail Corridor and Project Location). All of the construction staging

areas are accessible by four-wheel drive vehicle. After construction, the staging areas would be raked, and soil fabric would be installed, to reduce erosion until revegetation occurs.

Flagging and temporary construction fencing would be placed at the periphery of wetlands along the driveway west of the ranch house and the proposed staging area, and the South Fork Matanzas Creek at the vehicular bridge and proposed trail bridge, to prevent walking, placement or storage of construction equipment and supplies, and inadvertent ground disturbance in these areas.

Prior to construction the trail contractor will be required to develop a Fire Safety Plan and obtain approval from all emergency response agencies. The Fire Safety Plan would address:

- Procedures for reporting a fire
- Personnel and fire safety equipment the contractor would have on site, e.g. Nomex, fire tents, etc.
- Procedures to be taken on 'red flag days' (days of extreme fire danger.) On red flag days, trail construction would be discontinued.
- Procedures to ensure that all power equipment is fire safe.
- Training to be given contractor's employees regarding fire safety.
- The trail contractor would bring only the necessary amount of fuel and fuel mixtures to operate the machinery on site. No flammable products would be stored or left on site. The trail contractor would report immediately any spill of contaminants to the District or the contract management entity and the contractor would be solely responsible for any clean-up of such contaminants in compliance with all applicable local, state, and federal laws.
- All power equipment used on the trail would have spark arrestors.
- Trail contractor would have fire extinguishers and five gallon water dumps on site when operating power equipment.

To protect the trail from erosion and mud flows, plastic "Drift Fencing" would be installed on the downhill side of trail to catch loose debris. The fence would remain in place until the ground is stabilized. To prevent slipping and cracking during the rainy season and allow for accelerated native plant growth, trail crews would rake down and spread the "overburden" (the fill that is created by the digging of the trail machine). Trail workers would physically remove earth in the steep slide-slope areas and deposit the fill in safe areas. In order to prevent the introduction of invasive plants, including Yellow starthistle (*Centaurea solstitialis),* into the newly disturbed areas, native grass seed would be planted over sites where the overburden has been exposed. Only seed certified to be free of Yellow starthistle and other undesirable invasive plants would be used. All off-road equipment (including 'SWECO' Trail Dozers, trail motorcycles, and ATVs (all-terrain vehicles)) would be cleaned prior to leaving the project area (in addition to before entering the area) to avoid spreading starthistle to uninfested outside areas. Powerwashing would be done only in areas already infested.

For at least three years after construction, areas disturbed through project construction would be monitored annually, or more frequently if needed, for emergence of Yellow starthistle and other undesirable invasive plants, and for growth of desirable native species which would compete with invasive species. If Yellow starthistle is observed, it would be controlled by measures such as hand pulling, cultivation after the rainy season when soils are dry (which effectively controls yellow starthistle seedlings and rosettes), mowing, controlled burning at the end of the rainy season when flowers first appear, and/or biological control agents including, if

appropriate, the weevil species *Bangasternus orientalis* and *Eustenopus villosus* and the fly species *Urophora sirunaseva* and *Chaetorellia succinea*.

Silt fences would be established around the native bunch grass in the southwestern area of Cooper's Grove between the southern entrance of the switchbacks and the construction staging area, to prevent passage of machinery and placement of materials on this habitat type.

10. Project Objectives

The project sponsors have identified the following objectives of the proposed project:

- Create a continuous multi-use trail accommodating pedestrians, bicycles, and equestrians, and to the extent feasible, wheelchair users.
- Create a segment of the Bay Area Ridge Trail.
- Mitigate the potential environmental impacts of the project to a less than significant level.

11. Surrounding Land Uses and Setting:

The project site is located in a rural area on the north slope of Sonoma Mountain, a defining geographic feature of Sonoma County that serves as a backdrop for Bennett Valley to the north, Sonoma Valley to the east, Rohnert Park to the south and west, and Santa Rosa to the northwest. Sonoma Mountain Road, a winding rural roadway, passes roughly east-west to the north of the project site.

Land uses in the project vicinity consist of a mix of low-density rural residential, open space, and park uses. As shown in Figure 1: Trail Corridor and Project Location, the western portion of Jack London State Historic Park contains the easternmost portion of the proposed trail; the Park's access and parking facilities are located further east. In the middle portion of the trail (along the Sonoma Mountain Woodlands, Wilroth, Skiles Ranch, and Sonoma State University properties), the areas to the north and south of the proposed trail alignment consist of undeveloped open space on the north slope of Sonoma Mountain. In the western portion of the trail alignment, the majority of the Cooper's Grove property is undeveloped, but it contains four private inholdings. Two of these inholdings contain residences and a residence is currently being developed on a third. The Jacobs Ranch property, comprising the western terminus of the trail and location of the proposed access facilities, is predominantly undeveloped but contains two residences and associated outbuildings. The Fairfield Osborn Preserve, managed by Sonoma State University, is located south of the proposed trail alignment.

12. Public Agencies Whose Approval is Required:

The proposed project would require approval from the following public agencies:

- (Possibly) California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG): Streambed Alteration Permit for construction of bridges and creek crossings (to be included, if required, in Joint Aquatic Resource Permit Application (JARPA))

- (Possibly) United States Army Corps of Engineers: Section 404 permit for repositioning of rock within creeks (to be included, if required, in Joint Aquatic Resource Permit Application (JARPA))
- Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB): Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) and (Possibly) Water Quality Certification pursuant to Section 401 of the Clean Water Act where wetlands and other waters may be affected by development (to be included, if required, in Joint Aquatic Resource Permit Application (JARPA))
- Sonoma County Permit and Resource Management Department: Building permits for bridge footings and restroom(s)
- (Possibly) Sonoma County Permit and Resource Management Department: Grading permit

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED:

The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project, involving at least one impact that is a "Potentially Significant Impact" as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

[X] Aesthetics	[ ] Agricultural Resources	[X] Air Quality
[X] Biological Resources	[X] Cultural Resources	[X] Geology/Soils
[X] Hazards & Haz. Materials	[X] Hydrology/Water Quality	[ ] Land Use/Planning
[ ] Mineral Resources	[X] Noise	[ ] Population/Housing
[X] Public Services	[X] Recreation	[ ] Transportation/Traffic
[ ] Utilities/Service Systems	[X] Mandatory Findings of Significance	

DETERMINATION:

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

☐ I find that the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.

☒ I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.

☐ I find that the proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.

☐ I find that the proposed project MAY have a "potentially significant impact" or "potentially significant unless mitigated" impact on the environment, but at least one effect 1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on the attached sheets. An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.

☐ I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.

Signature	Date
Printed name	For

Exhibit 4: Mitigated Negative Declaration

Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
☐	☐	☐	☐

Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
☐	☐	☐	☐

EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS:

I. AESTHETICS — Would the project:

a)	Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	☐	☐	**X** ☐

Explanation: As discussed in Item IX.b, General Plan Policies, below, Sonoma Mountain Road is designated as a Scenic Corridor in the Sonoma County General Plan. Construction and use of the proposed trail between Jacobs Ranch and Jack London State Historic Park would not include any substantial structures or other changes that could significantly affect scenic vistas. Construction and use of the access facilities at Jacobs Ranch would involve minimal new structures: a new restroom and fencing at the parking area, trailhead signs, a possible handicapped-accessible restroom at the group picnic area, and a replacement of the existing bridge over the South Fork Matanzas Creek. The restroom(s) would be finished with earth-tone colors to blend with the visual surroundings. Due to the size and distance of these structures from Sonoma Mountain Road, as well as the intervening topography and tree cover, the impact, if any, on views from Sonoma Mountain Road and other viewpoints in the area, such as private residences, would be negligible. The access facilities would also involve alterations to the ground surface such as a new base rock–surfaced parking area, paving 1,000 feet of the driveway, new driveway turnouts, and a base rock–surfaced handicapped-only overlook parking area. None of these project components would have a substantial effect on existing scenic vistas. The project would have a ***less than significant*** impact on existing scenic vistas and the visual character of the site vicinity.

b)	Substantially damage scenic resources, including but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	☐	**X**	☐ ☐

Explanation: The project site is located on the north slope of Sonoma Mountain, a scenic forested area. As discussed in Item IX.b, General Plan Policies, below, Sonoma Mountain Road is designated as a Scenic Corridor in the Sonoma County General Plan, and the Open Space Element includes policies to preserve scenic values along Scenic Corridors. As discussed in Item I.a, above, the project would not have a substantial effect on views from Sonoma Mountain Road, a designated Scenic Corridor.

The potential historic and architectural values of the existing main house, ranch house, and barns on the Jacobs Ranch property have not been evaluated by an architectural historian, but these structures would be retained by the project; thus, any potential historic values would not be affected. The trail and access facilities of the proposed project also would not substantially damage rock outcroppings on Sonoma Mountain.

As discussed in Item IV.e, below, the project would involve trimming and/or removal of some trees along the trail route and the Jacobs Ranch driveway entrance to Sonoma Mountain Road. The Sonoma County Tree Protection Ordinance No. 4044 regulates the removal of oaks, madrone, redwood, and California bay. "Protected trees" are defined as trees having a

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
	☐	☐	☐	☐

minimum trunk diameter of nine inches measured at 4.5 feet above grade. Any limbs and branches removed as part of the project would be cut leaving a healthy branch collar to heal along the trunk of the tree, scars on living trees would be patched with tree wound sealant, and tree removal would be minimized along the trail alignment. Tree removal would be restricted to individual trees and would not exceed 50 percent of the protected trees on the trail alignment or access facilities. Nevertheless, trail and bridge crossing construction may require the removal or result in the injury of trees protected by the Sonoma County Tree Protection Ordinance, which would be a ***potentially significant impact***. Implementation of Mitigation Measure I-1, which stipulates measures for protection of existing trees and replacement of any protected trees that are removed (see Item IV.e, below), would reduce this impact to a ***less than significant*** level.

Mitigation Measure I-1: *Implement Mitigation Measures IV-4 and IV-5.*

c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?	☐	**X**	☐	☐

Explanation: See Items I.a and I.b, above.

d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	☐	☐	**X**	☐

Explanation: The lighting of the existing main house, ranch house, and other structures at Jacobs Ranch would not be altered by the proposed project. The new trail and access facilities would not be open during nighttime, and would not involve any additional lighting, with the possible exception of infrequent emergency or medical response activities. Impacts on light and glare would be ***less than significant***.

II. AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES — In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Dept. of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. Would the project:

a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?	☐	☐	**X**	☐

Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
☐	☐	☐	☐

Explanation: The project site is not currently in active agricultural use, but a ranch formerly occupied the Jacobs Ranch property. In any event, the proposed trail and access facilities project would not preclude future grazing or other agricultural uses of the site. This would be a ***less than significant*** impact.

b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract? ☐ ☐ **X** ☐

Explanation: Jack London State Historic Park has a land use designation of Public/Quasi Public, and is zoned Public Facilities (PF), in which permitted uses do not include agriculture. The other properties comprising the project site have land use designations of Resources and Rural Development or Diverse Agriculture, and are zoned Resources and Rural Development (RRD), Resources and Rural Development in Williamson Act (RRD/WA), or Diverse Agriculture (DA). A variety of agricultural uses are permitted in the RRD, RRD/WA, and DA districts. The Jacobs Ranch portion of the project site was formerly occupied by a ranch, a use for which the site remains potentially suitable. The proposed trail project would not substantially conflict with the long-term potential use of the site for grazing. Thus, the project would not conflict with the existing zoning for agricultural use.

The Cooper's Grove, Sonoma Mountain Woodlands, Wilroth, and Skiles Ranch properties, along with Jack London State Historic Park and the Sonoma State University property that is the location of one of the alternative trail segments, are not subject to Williamson Act contracts. The Jacobs Ranch property is currently under a Type 2 Williamson Act contract (open space). Implementation of the proposed project would require demonstration that the access facilities and trail are compatible uses as defined by the State under the Williamson Act as well as Sonoma County Board of Supervisors Resolutions.[3] It is not anticipated that the proposed access facilities and trail project would adversely affect the designated agricultural activities on the property that qualify it under the Williamson Act. In addition, the District has applied for non-renewal of the Williamson Act contract, which would result in the expiration of the contract in approximately ten years. For these reasons, the proposed project would not conflict with the Williamson Act currently applicable to the Jacobs Ranch property.

Impacts on agricultural zoning and Williamson Act contracts would be ***less than significant***.

c) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use? ☐ ☐ **X** ☐

[3] The Sonoma County Board of Supervisors has adopted the following resolutions for the properties along the trail corridor, all of which state that the Board approves the purchase for public outdoor recreation and that the acquisition is consistent with the 1989 Sonoma County General Plan: Resolutions 04-1170 and 04-1172 (Cooper's Grove), Resolution 03-0751 (Jacobs Ranch), Resolution 04-0963 (Wilroth), and Resolution 03-1294 (Skiles Ranch).

Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
☐	☐	☐	☐

Explanation: The proposed project site and surrounding areas are currently in park, open space, or low-density residential uses. Construction and use of the proposed trail and access facilities would not result in the conversion of any farmland to non-agricultural use. This would be a ***less than significant*** impact.

III. AIR QUALITY — Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the project:

a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	☐	☐	**X**	☐

Explanation: The San Francisco Bay Area Air Basin is currently non–attainment for ozone (State and federal ambient standards) and PM_{10} (State ambient standard). While air quality plans exist for ozone, none exists (or is currently required) for PM_{10}. The Revised San Francisco Bay Area Ozone Attainment Plan for the 1–Hour National Ozone Standard and the Bay Area 2005 Ozone Strategy are the current ozone air quality plans required under the federal Clean Air Act.[4,5] The State–mandated regional air quality plan is the Bay Area 2000 Clean Air Plan.[6] These plans contain mobile source controls, stationary source controls, and transportation control measures to be implemented in the region to attain the State and federal ozone standards within the Bay Area Air Basin.

A project would be judged to conflict with or obstruct implementation of the regional air quality plan if it would be inconsistent with the growth assumptions, in terms of population, employment, or regional growth in Vehicle Miles Traveled. The proposed project would generate an estimated maximum of 81 trips per day (see item XV, below), which would not conflict with any of the growth assumptions made in the preparation of these plans nor obstruct implementation of any of the proposed control measures contained in these plans.

b) Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?	☐	**X**	☐	☐

Explanation: Air quality impacts from a project, such as the proposed trail and access facilities, result from project construction and operation. Construction emissions, primarily fugitive dust and criteria air pollutants emitted by construction vehicles and equipment, would have a short-

[4] Bay Area Air Quality Management District, Revised San Francisco Bay Area Ozone Attainment Plan for the 1–Hour National Ozone Standard, October 24, 2001.

[5] Bay Area Air Quality Management District, *Bay Area 2005 Ozone Strategy, Final,* Adopted January 4, 2006.

[6] Bay Area Air Quality Management District, *Bay Area 2000 Clean Air Plan and Triennial Assessment*, December 20, 2000.

Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
☐	☐	☐	☐

term effect on air quality. Operational emissions, generated by project-related traffic, would continue to affect air quality throughout the lifetime of the project.

Project operation would affect local air quality by increasing the number of vehicles on nearby roads and at the project site, and by introducing stationary emissions to the project site. Transportation sources are the primary source of operational project-related emissions.[7] The proposed trail and access facilities would not generate substantial amounts of stationary source emissions (such as combustion of natural gas for building space and water heating at the Jacobs Ranch residences). The Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) has established thresholds for projects requiring its review for potential air quality impacts. These thresholds are based on the minimum size projects which the BAAQMD considers capable of producing air quality problems due to vehicular emissions. One of the applicable thresholds is 2,000 new vehicle trips per day. The proposed project would generate an estimated maximum of 81 trips per day (see item XV, below), well below the BAAQMD standard. Therefore, the impact on operational air quality would be considered ***less than significant***.

Construction of the project would involve earthmoving and grading operations, and/or wind blowing over exposed earth. Exhaust emissions and fugitive particulate matter emissions would temporarily affect local air quality. Fine particulate matter (PM_{10}) is the pollutant of greatest concern with respect to construction.[8] PM_{10} emissions can result from a variety of construction activities, including earthmoving, grading, vehicle travel on paved and unpaved surfaces, and vehicle and equipment exhaust. Although it is more of a nuisance than a hazard for most people, this dust could affect persons with respiratory diseases, as well as sensitive electronic or communications equipment. Consistent with Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) CEQA Guidelines, construction-period air emissions are considered less than significant if effective control measures are implemented such as requiring all debris to be covered and to maintain and operate construction equipment so as to minimize exhaust emissions of particulates and other pollutants. The impact of fugitive dust and vehicle emissions due to construction of the proposed project is a ***potentially significant*** impact that would be reduced to a ***less-than-significant*** level by implementation of the following mitigation measure.

> ***Mitigation Measure III-1:*** *The project applicant shall reduce the severity of project construction–period dust impacts by requiring implementation of the following dust control measures by contractors during construction:*
>
> *a) Watering should be used to control dust generation during excavation, grading, and site preparation activities.*
>
> *b) Cover all trucks hauling debris, soils, sand or other such material from the site or require all trucks to maintain at least two feet of freeboard.*
>
> *c) Use dust–proof chutes to load debris into trucks whenever feasible.*

[7] Bay Area Air Quality Management District, BAAQMD CEQA Guidelines, Assessing the Air Quality Impacts of Projects and Plans, April 1996, Revised December 1999.

[8] Bay Area Air Quality Management District, *BAAQMD CEQA Guidelines, Assessing the Air Quality Impacts of Projects and Plans*, April 1996, Revised December 1999.

Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
☐	☐	☐	☐

d) Water all active construction areas at least twice daily.

e) Water or cover all stockpiles of debris, soil, sand, or other materials that can be blown by the wind.

f) Apply water three times daily, or apply (non–toxic) soil stabilizers, on all unpaved access roads, parking areas, and staging areas at construction sites.

g) Sweep daily (preferably with water sweepers) all paved access roads, parking areas, and staging areas at construction sites.

h) Sweep streets daily (preferably with water sweepers) if visible soil material is carried onto adjacent public streets.

i) Require the project contractor(s) to maintain and operate construction equipment so as to minimize exhaust emissions of particulates and other pollutants, by such means as prohibiting idling motors when equipment is not in use or when trucks are waiting in queues, and implementing specific maintenance programs to reduce emissions for equipment that would be in frequent use for much of the construction period.

j) All vehicles and equipment shall adhere to a 15 mph speed limit on Jacobs Ranch.

c) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)?	☐	**X**	☐	☐

Explanation: As discussed in Item III.b, above, project construction would result in the fugitive dust and vehicle emissions, which are criteria pollutants. This potentially significant project-related impact would be reduced to a less-than-significant level by implementation of Mitigation Measure III-1, above, which stipulates measures for control of construction-related dust and vehicle emissions. For similar reasons, the project also would not result in a cumulatively considerable net increase in these criteria pollutants.

d) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	☐	**X**	☐	☐

Explanation: As discussed in Item III.b, above, project construction would result in the fugitive dust and vehicle emissions. This potentially significant project-related impact would be reduced to a less-than-significant level by implementation of the measures for control of construction-related dust and vehicle emissions in Mitigation Measure III-1, above. This mitigation measure was developed to account for effects on sensitive receptors and no sensitive receptors would be exposed to substantial pollutant concentrations.

e) Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial	☐	☐	☐	**X**

number of people?

Explanation: The construction and use of the proposed trail and access facilities would not generate substantial new odors. There would be ***no impact***.

IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Introduction

An evaluation of potential impacts of the proposed project on biological resources was conducted by an independent consultant,[9] and the results are presented below. The evaluation included a literature search and field surveys of the proposed project trail alignment, staging areas, and Jacobs Ranch trailhead on January 10, 2006; May 4, 2006; and May 22, 2006.

Vegetation Cover and Wildlife Habitat

Grassland, Oregon white oak woodland, California bay laurel, and Redwood forest are the major vegetation communities along the proposed trail corridor. The characteristic plant species that define the vegetation cover types include common native and non-native trees, grass, and herbaceous species.

Grassland. This vegetation cover type is interspersed on relatively flat terrain between oak woodland and bay forest cover. On more disturbed sites, the grassland cover is dominated by non-native, annual grasses including wild oats (*Avena barbata*), ripgut brome (*Bromus diandrus*), soft chess (*Bromus hordeaceus*), and Italian ryegrass (*Lolium multiflorum*). In some areas, perennial "bunch grasses" dominate small patches within the larger grassland habitat. Characteristic species include California brome (*Bromus carinatus*), needlegrass (*Nassella pulchra*), and bluegrass (*Poa secunda*). In addition to grasses, broad-leaved plants, some typically referred to as "wildflowers", are major components of grassland habitat and include rancher's fireweed (*Amsinkia menziesii* var. *intermedia*), lupine (*Lupinus bicolor* and *L. albifrons*), popcorn flower (*Plagiobothrys nothofulvus*), geranium (*Geranium* spp.), harvest brodiaea (*Brodiaea elegans*), and storksbill (*Erodium botrys*).

Oregon White Oak Woodland. This vegetation cover type is dominated by oak trees, chiefly Oregon white oak (*Quercus garryana*) and black oak (*Quercus kelloggii*) with various co-dominant tree species such as California bay laurel (*Umbellularia californica*), and an occasional Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), madrone (*Arbutus menziesii*), or California buckeye (*Aesculus californica*). Understory vegetation is mostly scattered woody shrubs, such as Manzanita (*Arctostaphylos manzanita* ssp. *manzanita*), mountain-mahogany (*Cercocarpus betuloides),* poison oak (*Toxicodendron diversilobum*), and a few ferns and broad-leaved plants. These include wood fern (*Dryopteris arguta*), sword fern (*Polystichum californicum*), bracken fern (*Pteridium aquilinum*), maidenhair fern (*Adiantum jordanii*), mules ears (*Wyethia glabra*), hound's tongue (*Cynoglossum grande*), and larkspur (*Delphinium nudicaule*).

Bay Forest. California bay is the most dominant component of the vegetation cover. Typically, the bay canopy is thick and often in monotypic stands. There are few shrubs or herbs in the

[9] Holton, Booker, TOVA Applied Science and Technology, *2006 Biological Assessment Draft, Sonoma Mountain Trail Project,* 29 November 2006.

understory of the dense tree canopy. On sites where there are gaps in the bay tree canopy, individual madrone, black oak, California buckeye, and big leaf maple (*Acer macrophyllum*) trees occur in openings. Tanoak (*Lithocarpus densiflora*), hazelnut (*Corylus cornuta*), various species of ferns (*Pteridium aquilinum, Adiantum jordanii, Dryopteris arguta*, etc.), and a sparse distribution of herbaceous species, such as hound's tongue (*Cynoglossum grande*), red larkspur (*Delphinium nudicaule*), and woodland star (*Lithophragma affine*) occur in the understory of the California bay forest cover.

Redwood Forest. Redwood forest occurs along portions of the South Fork Matanzas Creek, near the proposed start of the trail connection to Jack London State Historic Park, east of the proposed staging area and trailhead. Pure stands of redwood trees (*Sequoia sempervirens*) transition to mixed stands along the edges and within clearings containing California bay, tanoak, red alder *(Alnus rubra*), madrone, big-leaf maple, and Douglas-fir. Of the great variety of lesser vegetation found in association with redwood, these species are especially common: bracken *(Pteridium aquilinum* var. *pubescens),* sword fern *(Polystichum munitum and P. californicum),* wood rose *(Rosa gymnocarpa)* and snowberry *(Symphoricarpos mollis).*

Wetlands. Small, seasonally wet areas in the form of grassy freshwater seeps and swales occur along the existing road between the Jacobs Ranch caretaker's house and barn and the equipment shed. Another small seep exists near the Cooper's Grove western property border approximately 1,000 feet northeast of the Jacobs Ranch caretaker's house. The vegetation cover of these areas are predominantly grasses such as annual beard grass (*Polypogon monspeliensis*), velvet grass (*Holcus lanatus*), and Italian ryegrass (*Lolium multiflorum*), along with other grasses that typical of the drier upland grassland habitat. These seasonally wet areas also contain typical grassland-associated herbaceous species such as American vetch (*Vicia americana*) and prickly sow-thistle (*Sonchus asper*).

Regulatory Framework for the Protection of Biological Resources

Federal Endangered Species Act (FESA). Federally listed threatened and endangered species and their habitats are protected under provisions of the FESA. "Take" under FESA includes activities that would harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect listed species. Harm specifically includes significant habitat modification or degradation of habitat of a listed species. The US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) regulates activities that may result in "take" of individuals. Candidates and species proposed for listing also receive special attention from federal agencies during their review.

Federal Clean Water Act Section 404. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) has jurisdiction over Waters of the U.S. under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act and navigable waters of the U.S. under Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899. Waters of the U.S. (jurisdictional waters) under Section 404 include all waters used, or potentially used, for interstate commerce. Such waters include wetlands, tidal waters, tributary waters, and other waters such as lakes. Wetlands include marshes, meadows, swamps, bogs, floodplains, basins, and seeps. Wetlands may also include less obvious areas such as seasonal ponds, seasonally wet pastures, or seasonal meadows. Navigable waters of the U.S. subject to Corps jurisdiction under Section 10 include all lands below mean high water. Project activities that would result in placement of fill, dredging, destruction, or alteration of Waters of the U.S. must be in compliance with permit requirements of the Corps. A Water Quality Certification pursuant to Section 401 of the Clean Water Act is required for Federal Section 404 permit actions. If

applicable, construction would also require a request for Water Quality Certification (or Waiver thereof) from the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB).

Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA). The Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA, 16 U.S.C., Sec. 703, Supp I) prohibits any person to:

> *"pursue, hunt, take, capture, kill, attempt to take, capture or kill, possess, offer for sale, sell, offer to purchase, purchase, deliver for shipment, ship, cause to be shipped, deliver for transportation, transport, cause to be transported, carry, or cause to be carried by any means whatever, receive for shipment, transportation or carriage, or export, at any time, or in any manner, any migratory bird, included in the terms of this Convention ... for the protection of migratory birds ... or any part, nest, or egg of any such bird."*[10]

The list of migratory birds includes almost every native bird in the United States. This law also extends to parts of birds, nests, and eggs. It is therefore a violation of the MBTA to directly kill or destroy an active nest of any bird species. The MBTA is typically applied on domestic projects to prevent injury or death of nesting birds and their chicks.

California Endangered Species Act (CESA). State-listed rare, threatened, and endangered species are protected under provisions of CESA. Activities that may result in take of individuals (e.g., "hunt, pursue, catch, capture, or kill, or attempt to hunt, pursue, catch, capture, or kill") are regulated by the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG). CDFG has interpreted take to include the destruction of nesting and foraging habitat necessary to maintain viable breeding populations of relevant state threatened or endangered species.

California Species of Special Concern. The CDFG recently changed its policy concerning California *Species of Special Concern*. Originally, the CDFG defined species of special concern as those animal species whose California breeding populations may face extirpation (extinction) in the near future. The CDFG has redefined species of special concern as a management designation used to track population trends of certain animal species. Species of special concern do not receive protection under the CESA or any section of the California Fish and Game Code, and do not necessarily meet CEQA Guidelines Section 15380 criteria as rare, threatened, endangered, or of other public concern. Like federal species of concern, the determination of significance for California species of special concern must be made on a case-by-case basis.

California Fully Protected Species. Sections 3511 (birds), 4700 (mammals), 5050 (reptiles and amphibians), and 5515 (fish) of the California Fish and Game Code designate certain species as "fully protected." Fully protected species, or parts thereof, cannot be taken or possessed at any time. The California Fish and Game Commission, however, may authorize the collecting of such species for necessary scientific research. Section 3511 of the California Fish and Game Code may authorize the live capture and relocation of fully protected birds pursuant to a permit for the protection of livestock. Legally imported and fully protected species or parts thereof may be possessed only under a permit issued by CDFG.

[10] Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 (16 U.S.C. 703-712; Ch. 128; July 13,1918; 40 Stat. 755) as amended by Chapter 634; June 20,1936; 49 Stat. 1556; P.L. 86-732; September 8, 1960; 74 Stat. 866; P.L. 90-578; October 17,1968; 82 Stat. 1118; P.L. 91-135; December 5,1969; 83 Stat. 282; P.L. 93-300; June 1,1974; 88 Stat. 190; P.L. 95-616; November 8, 1978; 92 Stat. 3111; P.L. 99-645; November 10,1986; 100 Stat. 3590 and P.L. 105-312; October30, 1998; 112 Stat. 2956.

California Fish and Game Code – Protection of Raptors. Birds of prey are protected in California under the California Fish and Game Code, §3503.5. Under §3503.5, it is unlawful to take, possess or destroy any raptors including owls, or to take, possess, or destroy the nest or eggs of raptors or owls. The CDFG considers a disturbance that causes nest abandonment or loss of reproductive effort as a "taking." Construction disturbance during the breeding season can result in the incidental loss of fertile eggs or nestlings or otherwise lead to nest abandonment. Any losses of fertile eggs or nesting raptors or any activities resulting in nest abandonment are significant impacts.

California Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act. The Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act, in part, implements the federal Clean Water Act (CWA) to provide a mechanism for protecting the quality of the state's waters through the State Water Quality Control Board (SWRCB) and the nine Regional Water Quality Control Boards (RWQCBs). The SWRCB and the San Francisco Bay RWQCB have taken the position that the Porter-Cologne Act and the San Francisco Bay Basin plan developed pursuant to the Act provide independent authority to regulate discharge of fill material to wetlands outside the jurisdiction of the Corps.

California Fish and Game Code Section 1601-1606. Jurisdictional authority of the CDFG over wetland areas and streams is established under Sections 1601-1606 of the Fish and Game Code. This code pertains to activities which would disrupt the natural flow or alter the channel, bed or bank of any lake, river or stream, and requires an agreement identifying appropriate mitigation before any disturbance is allowed by the CDFG.

Sonoma County Tree Protection Ordinance No. 4044. The County Tree Protection Ordinance regulates the removal of certain designated trees, including oaks, madrone, redwood, and California bay. "Protected trees" are defined as trees having a minimum trunk diameter of nine inches measured at 4.5 feet above grade. According to the ordinance, protected trees are to be replaced at a 1:1 ratio or proposed removal is not to exceed 50 percent of the protected trees on a site. Douglas fir is not considered a protected tree species under this ordinance.

Sonoma County Heritage Tree Ordinance No. 3651. The County Heritage Tree Ordinance provides for the identification and protection of designated heritage trees.

Sonoma County Valley Oak Tree Ordinance No. 4991. In 1997, Sonoma County regulations also went into effect regarding the protection of valley oaks. These consisted of a General Plan amendment to include new policies to identify and protect valley oaks, a zoning ordinance text amendment establishing the Valley Oak Habitat (VOH) combining district and requiring mitigation where tree removal is proposed, a zoning ordinance map change designating areas with soils which tend to support valley oak, and establishment of general guidelines required in the VOH zoning district. Ordinance No. 4991 provides a definition of "large valley oak" (diameter at breast height greater than 20 inches) and "small valley oak" (diameter at breast height of 20 inches or less), and identifies mitigation options. Mitigation depends on tree size or the cumulative diameter for smaller oaks, and must be implemented within one year of tree removal. Mitigation options include retention of existing trees, replacement plantings, a combination of retention and replacement, or payment of in-lieu fees. The mitigation requirements are not rigorous, ranging from a requirement to retain one or more trees for every one removed, to a 50 dollar in-lieu fee to be used for replacement plants of valley oak by the County. No permit is issued by the County, but a written notice must be filed at least five days prior to tree removal. The Stewardship Guidelines defined in Board of Supervisors Resolution

No. 96-1624 emphasize the importance of retaining valley oaks to the extent possible and providing valley oak plants as part of landscaping for development projects.

Sonoma County Protection of Riparian Corridors. The Sonoma County zoning code provides "streamside conservation area" protection to all waterways that are designated as "riparian corridors" in the Open Space Element of the General Plan. The width of the conservation area is determined based upon classification of urban, upland, flatland, or Russian River riparian corridors. The corridors in urban and upland areas have a 50-foot from top of bank conservation area, while streams traversing level flatland areas are required to have a 100-foot wide conservation area. Russian River riparian corridor conservation areas extend 200 feet from the top of bank. Road crossings, street crossings, utility line crossings, and creek side bikeways, trails, and parks within urban riparian corridors are allowable uses in streamside conservation areas.

Special-Status Plants

A search of existing literature and databases, including the California Department of Fish and Game's Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB) records, and California Native Plant Society (CNPS)[11] electronic databases, identified potentially occurring special-status plant species near the project area (see Table A-1 in Appendix).

No special-status plants were found on the site during the January 10, 2006; May 4, 2006; and May 22, 2006 surveys. The project site does not contain specialized habitat types, such as serpentine soils, freshwater marsh, chaparral, vernal pool, coastal bluff, or coastal scrub/prairie cover suitable for some of the species identified in Table A-1 (see Appendix). The site's woodland and grass dominated vegetation cover and riparian corridors, however, could provide habitat for other special status plants recorded to occur in other areas of Sonoma County. Table A-2 (see Appendix) summarizes the probability of occurrence of these species, although none of these species was observed to occur during the field surveys conducted by TOVA Applied Science & Technology.

Phytopthora ramorum *in the Sonoma Mountain Area*

Since 1995, native oaks have been dying in Sonoma County due to the disease known as Sudden Oak Death (SOD), caused by the pathogen *Phytopthora ramorum,* a fungus associated with wet or moist climates, cool temperatures, and living plants. Its spores occur in soil and water as well as plant material. The risk of movement and spread of the organism is greatest in muddy areas and during rainy weather. There are documented cases of *P. ramorium* infestation of coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*) and California bay laurel (*Umbellularia californica*) in the nearby Fairfield Osborn Preserve, Jack London State Historic Park and Jacobs Ranch, and along the proposed trail alignment.[12]

In addition to coast live oak and bay laurel, the SOD pathogen affects California black oak *(Quercus kelloggii),* tanbark oak = tanoak *(Lithocarpus densiflorus),* rhododendron

[11] CNPS. 2001. Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants of California (sixth edition). Rare Plant Scientific Advisory Committee, David R. Tibor, Convening Editor. California Native Plant Society. Sacramento, CA x+388pp.

[12] University of California at Berkeley, College of Natural Resources, Geospatial Imaging and Informatics Facility (GIIF), Sudden Oak Death GIS data, http://kellylab.berkeley.edu/SODmonitoring/whereisSOD.htm, viewed 16 July 2007.

(Rhododendron spp.), madrone *(Arbutus menziesii),* California huckleberry *(Vaccinium ovatum),* California buckeye *(Aesculus californica),* big-leaf maple *(Acer macrophyllum),* toyon *(Heteromeles arbutifolia),* manzanita *(Arctostaphylos* spp.), and coast redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*) (see Table A-3 in Appendix).

Phytopthora ramorum spores invade the trunks of tanoak, California black oak, coast live oak and other oak species. The fungus appears to infect only aboveground plant parts (i.e., leaves, branches, and/or stems). Infections on tanoak occur on stems, branches, and leaves. However, on true oaks, *P. ramorum* does not appear to infect small branches or leaves as on tanoak; therefore, infection and mortality appear to be more commonly associated with larger trees rather than seedlings and saplings. A number of opportunistic organisms commonly occur on oak and tanoak trees exhibiting advanced *P. ramorum* infections including ambrosia beetles (*Monarthrum scutellare* and *M. dentiger),* bark beetles (*Psudopityophthorus pubipennis*), and a sapwood rotting fungus, *Hypoxylon thouarsianum*. These organisms may hasten the death of *P. ramorum*-infested trees.

Symptoms of sudden oak death differ among the known hosts that occur in the project study area (see Table A-3 in Appendix). One characteristic of this *Phytophthora* infection in oaks and tanbark oaks is the sudden simultaneous leaf death on a major stem or leaf death on an entire tree, an observation that gave rise to the term "sudden oak death." The occurrence of leaf death may occur a year or more after the initial infection and many months after the tree has been girdled by the pathogen.

The trees and shrubs within the alignment of the proposed trail, creek crossings, staging areas, and Jacobs Ranch Trailhead currently do not clearly exhibit the external symptoms of SOD; however, *P. ramorum* infection could spread to the trail alignment from nearby areas of known infection, particularly since the disease is known to occur throughout the project site, as well as in the nearby Fairfield Osborn Preserve and Jack London State Historic Park.

Invasive Plants

The California Invasive Plant Council (Cal-IPC) maintains an inventory of invasive plants that may have land management implications throughout the State. The CAL-IPC list for the floristic region that includes Sonoma Mountain contains non-native California species that are typically found in the region. Some of these listed species occur sporadically in low population numbers or as small patches in the Sonoma Mountain project area, including along some portions of the proposed trail alignment or within the proposed staging areas and at the Jacobs Ranch trailhead (See Table A-4 in Appendix).

Other than the Himalayan blackberry and the grass, foxtail chess, Cal-IPC does not view the invasiveness of most of these species as potentially threatening. The potential problem related to the nonnative blackberry and foxtail chess is rated high, based on the following Cal-IPC definition:

> ***"High** – These species have severe ecological impacts on physical processes, plant and animal communities, and vegetation structure. Their reproductive biology and other attributes are conducive to moderate to high rates of dispersal and establishment. Most are widely distributed ecologically*."

Only one patch of Himalayan blackberry occurs at a creek crossing under a white oak canopy along the proposed trail alignment. The blackberry growth is restricted to and limited by the

creek channel and would not be adversely affected by the creek crossing. The construction of the trail crossing would not result in the invasive spread of blackberry to other areas of the creek or to upland areas of the proposed trail.

The foxtail chess is located as individual plants in grassland vegetation cover. The species does not occur in large, monotypic stands or in such large, dominating numbers where the potential spread of this species would pose a significant invasion problem.

The other potentially invasive plant species identified in Table A-4 all are rated as "moderate" or "limited" by Cal-IPC:

> ***"Moderate** – These species have substantial and apparent—but generally not severe—ecological impacts on physical processes, plant and animal communities, and vegetation structure. Their reproductive biology and other attributes are conducive to moderate to high rates of dispersal, though establishment is generally dependent upon ecological disturbance. Ecological amplitude and distribution may range from limited to widespread.*
>
> ***Limited** – These species are invasive but their ecological impacts are minor on a statewide level or there was not enough information to justify a higher score. Their reproductive biology and other attributes result in low to moderate rates of invasiveness. Ecological amplitude and distribution are generally limited, but these species may be locally persistent and problematic".*

These potentially invasive species do not occur in dense stands or do not cover extensive areas of the project site in a distribution pattern that would indicate that they pose future problems or could adversely impact the native flora along the proposed trail, at creek crossings, at the staging areas or Jacobs Ranch Trailhead.

Common Wildlife

Wildlife associated with the vegetation cover and habitat types within the Sonoma Mountain project areas are expected to include large mammals such as mountain lion and deer, mid-sized mammals such as fox and raccoon, and small mammals such as western gray squirrel and various mice. Many species of birds use the area seasonally or are year-round residents. These include such raptors as red-tailed hawk; and passerine birds such as scrub jay, junco, sparrow, and meadowlark.

Reptiles are also likely to occur in grasslands on the site. They include western fence lizard (*Sceloporus occidentalis*) and gopher snake (*Pituophis melanoleucus*). Amphibians such as the Pacific tree frog (*Hyla regilla*) probably disperse and forage in non-native annual grasslands in the winter.

Wildlife species or their signs observed along or near the proposed trail alignment include the species listed in Table A-5 (see Appendix).

Special Status Wildlife

A search of existing literature and databases, including included the California Department of Fish and Game's Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB) records, and California Native Plant

Society (CNPS)[13] electronic databases, identified potentially occurring special-status wildlife species near the project area (see Table A-6 in Appendix).

No special-status wildlife species were observed within the proposed trail alignment and within the potential project staging areas during the January and May 2006 field surveys and none are expected to occur (see Table A-7 in Appendix).

Migratory Bird and Raptor Nests

Several birds (see Table A-8 in Appendix) protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act may be associated with the riparian drainage areas that the proposed trail alignment would cross. The trees adjacent to creek tributaries and drainage ways could provide the habitat structure and vegetation cover for many of the species of birds observed in the Sonoma Mountain Area, including those on the nearby Fairfield Osborn Preserve.

Three trees along the proposed alignment contain nest-like structures that appeared to be inactive at the time of the field surveys but nevertheless show some of the characteristic architecture of bird nests. One nest is located in a bay tree along the proposed trail alignment corridor passing through the Skiles Fee Portion property. The structure is located approximately 80 feet above the ground and appears to be a three-foot-wide platform of sticks and twigs, with leaves and other debris perched at the crotch of the tree. A similar nest-like structure is located in a bay tree along the proposed trail alignment corridor within the Wilroth Property and another similar structure is also located in a bay tree within the Sonoma Mountain Woodlands. At each of the three nest-like structures, there was no evidence of current or past bird nesting, such as whitewash or stick and debris remains from nests, observed on the site at the bases and under the trees during the January and May surveys.

— Would the project:

a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	☐	X	☐	☐

Explanation:

There are no special-status plants or animals currently occurring within the alignment corridor of the trail or within the boundaries of the proposed staging areas. Field surveys of the proposed trail alignment, staging areas, and Jacobs Ranch trailhead conducted in January and May 2006 determined the absence of special-status plants and animals.

[13] CNPS. 2001. Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants of California (sixth edition). Rare Plant Scientific Advisory Committee, David R. Tibor, Convening Editor. California Native Plant Society. Sacramento, CA x+388pp.

Due to the presence of suitable nesting habitat, raptors could nest at some future time in the trees on or near the project site prior to construction activities. The field surveys indicated the presence of potential nest sites in three bay trees near or adjacent to the proposed trail alignment. There is the possibility that these trees support active nests and there is the remote possibility that new nests could establish on the site prior to trail construction, and that tree and shrub removal, site preparation and other construction activities could adversely affect nests and breeding activities of special-status birds. The removal of trees or other plants containing nests or construction activities near active nests of special status bird species would be a ***potentially significant impact***.

The removal of trees and shrubs, potential nesting habitat, could result in direct mortality of birds. Riparian trees provide potential nesting sites for Cooper's hawk, yellow warbler, and other migratory species. Direct impacts of tree and shrub removal on breeding and nesting of these species could occur, or result in mortality or injury to individual birds nesting in trees. Indirect impacts on breeding and nesting behavior due to construction noise could occur from activities along the trail alignment and creek corridors, and site preparation and other trail construction activities near the corridor. Construction activities, construction noise, and the removal of trees and shrubs during the February-September breeding season could adversely affect special-status nesting birds, which would be a ***potentially significant impact.***

The following mitigation measure would reduce the impact of trail construction on nesting raptors and migratory birds in general to a ***less than significant*** level.

Mitigation Measure IV-1:
For scheduled construction between February 1 and August 1, a qualified biologist shall conduct a pre-construction survey to determine if nesting is occurring in trees along the alignment of the trail section to be constructed. The survey shall occur within 14 days prior to the initiation of trail construction activities during the early part of the breeding season (February through April) and no more than 30 days prior to the initiation of these activities during the later part of the breeding season (May through August). An active nest would be indicated by one or more of the following:

a) Incubation behavior of adults (e.g., regular periods of "disappearance" into the same location followed by short, secretive flights to forage)

b) Extreme distress and alarm calls when in close vicinity of the nest tree

c) Observation of food being carried on the beak or claws to the nest

If the nests or nesting behavior are observed, the proposed trail alignment shall be located at least 100 feet from the nest tree and the following measures shall be implemented to protect the nest site:

a) Establishment of a buffer using flagging or staking around the tree in accordance with CDFG recommendations until the young have fledged. The nest tree shall be monitored a minimum of once per week to confirm that the young have fledged and that no new nesting pairs are present before the buffer is removed.

b) If it is not feasible to delay or modify construction activities around the tree, the CDFG shall be contacted to discuss alternative buffer options.

Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
☐	☐	☐	☐

If construction is planned between August 1 and February 1 trail construction could proceed as scheduled.

b)	Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	☐	**X**	☐ ☐

Explanation: Drainage tributaries to Matanzas Creek are distributed throughout the north slope of the mountain. The proposed trail alignment would cross over 13 or 14 of these drainage ways, in addition to the existing Jacobs Ranch bridge crossing over Matanzas Creek, as shown in Table A-9 (see Appendix). One additional riparian corridor would be crossed if a spur trail through Cooper's Grove were to be selected as part of the trail system.

The vegetation cover along the riparian corridors consists of a closed-canopy of typically mature California bay, Oregon white oak, or California redwood trees with no understory shrubs and a few, non-emergent herbaceous plants. There are emergent plants within the rocky channels of these creeks.

At the creek crossings the width of the defined creek channel from top-of-bank to top-of-bank, as measured at Ordinary High Water (OHW[14]) ranges from 6.0 to 26.0 feet, with an average width of approximately 14 feet.

The construction and installation of the trail would require the placement of rock fill and construction of three or four bridges to cross the drainage ways. Each bridge would be a six-foot-wide truss-rail structure that would vary in length depending on the width of required crossing. Bridge concrete footings would be installed so as to not impede creek water flow or cause secondary erosion or damage to the stream. At each of the creek crossings, rock-lined inlets and energy dissipaters made of rock would be installed. The installation of rock or bridge crossings at tributary creeks and drainage ways would result in the placement of fill within and adjacent to creeks protected by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act and Section 1601-1603 of the Fish and Game Code. The placement of rock fill and bridge support structures within tributary creek channels would be a ***potentially significant impact*** if the drainage and habitat function, including water quality, of the tributary creeks are not retained. The excavation of rocks from areas within the creek and repositioning them to create the trail rock crossings may require a Section 404 permit for the "Discharge of Dredged or Fill Material into Waters of the United States." The US Army Corps of Engineers would need to verify that proposed repositioning of rocks would not destroy or degrade an area of waters of the United States. In addition, the California Department of Fish and Game would need to verify if such activities as

[14] Determined by the level at the height of a litter or debris line, the top of the zone of washed roots (roots exposed in the bank), or shelving on the creek bank.

the excavation and repositioning of river rock to create the trail rock crossing or the construction of the bridge crossings would be in compliance with the Fish and Game Code, Section 1601-1603. Implementation of the following mitigation measure would reduce this impact to a ***less than significant*** level.

Mitigation Measure IV-2*:*

Prior to creek crossing construction, the project applicant shall contact the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the California Department of Fish and Game to determine if this activity requires either a "Permit for Discharges of Dredged/Fill Material into Waters of the U.S." from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) pursuant to Clean Water Act, Section 404, or a "Streambed Alteration Agreement" from the California Department of Fish and Game (Department) pursuant to Section 1601-1603 of the State Fish and Game Code. The approval or permit conditions from either or both of these agencies shall be incorporated into the project plans.

At a minimum, the following conditions are typically incorporated into such plans:

- *Work within the creek corridor shall be confined to the period April 15 to October 15. Revegetation work would not necessarily be confined to this period.*
- *No heavy equipment shall operate in the creek where there is water.*
- *Any equipment or vehicles crossing the creek, or operating adjacent to the creek channel or wetlands, shall be cleaned of all external oil, grease, and materials that, if introduced to water, could be deleterious top aquatic life, wildlife or riparian habitat.*
- *Any equipment or vehicles crossing drainages, permitted for traffic crossings, or operating adjacent to the creek channel or wetlands, shall be checked and maintained daily to prevent leaks of material that, if introduced to water, could be deleterious to aquatic life, wildlife or riparian habitat.*
- *The trail construction contractor shall take whatever precautions are necessary to minimize the discharge of fine sediment from the work site to the waters of the US or State, including the use of silt and debris fencing to catch sediment, spreading overburden, and seeding with native grass and other seeds.*
- *Adequate erosion and siltation control measures shall be used to prevent turbid or silt-laden water from entering the tributary creek or drainage ways to the creek. All erosion controls shall be in place prior to commencement of work and shall be maintained for the duration of project construction.*
- *The limits of the work site and all environmentally sensitive areas shall be marked to prevent equipment and worker access.*
- *Bridge building materials and/or construction equipment shall not be stockpiled or stored where they could be washed into the water or where they will cover aquatic or riparian vegetation.*

Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
☐	☐	☐	☐

- *Debris, soil, silt, bark, rubbish, creosote-treated wood, raw cement/concrete or washings thereof, asphalt, paint or other coating material, oil or other petroleum products, or any other substances which could be hazardous to aquatic life, resulting from project related activities, shall be prevented from contaminating the soil and/or entering the waters of the state. Any of these materials, placed within or where they may enter the creek, by Operator or any party working under contract, or with the permission of the Operator, shall be removed immediately.*

- *During construction, the contractor shall not dump any litter or construction debris within the riparian creek zone. All such debris and waste shall be picked up daily and properly disposed of at an appropriate site.*

- *If, in the opinion of the Corps or Department, conditions arise, or change, in such a manner as to be considered deleterious to the stream or wildlife, operations shall cease until corrective measures approved by the Corps or Department are taken.*

The above conditions would be finalized by the US Army Corps of Engineers or Department of Fish and Game subsequent to the approval of permit or agreement applications.

c)	Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	☐	☐	☐	**X**

Explanation: Under the Clean Water Act Section 404 and regulations administered by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), a wetland is an area that is:

> *" …inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions."*

By the Corps definition, three defining conditions or criteria must be present to define an area as a wetland – hydrology, soil, and vegetation. The proposed trail alignment and staging areas would not intercept or cross a wetland, or result in an alteration of wetland hydrology. The trail alignment and location of staging areas and access roads have been planned to avoid impacts to wetlands, and any nearby wetlands, such as seasonally wet areas along the existing road between the Jacobs Ranch caretaker's house and barn, and the equipment shed, would be avoided. In addition, the trail would avoid a seep draining west from Cooper's Grove into Jacobs Ranch approximately 1,000 feet northeast of the caretaker's house. Flagging and temporary construction fencing would be placed at the periphery of these areas to prevent walking, placement or storage of construction equipment and supplies, and inadvertent ground disturbance in wetlands. There would be ***no impact***.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with any established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?	☐	X	☐	☐

Explanation: Increased human presence can adversely affect wildlife use and occurrence within a given area. While the proposed project would not result in permanent occupation of previously undeveloped areas, construction and use of the multi-use trail would introduce humans and domestic animals (such as horses) into natural habitat areas. Heavy use of trails could inhibit free movement of animals to preferred areas and temporarily displace wildlife from areas immediately adjacent to the trails. While some displacement would be temporary, long-term behavioral responses, such as abandonment of preferred foraging areas, could also occur. In addition, some neighboring properties will continue to support livestock (cattle and sheep) which would need to be contained.

The construction of new fencing could have adverse effects on wildlife movement. Fence lines currently exist on many portions of the proposed trail alignment. For instance, fencing along the western border of Jack London State Historic Park was designed and installed to be feral pig resistant. The installation of new fencing, including fencing to exclude trail users from the Fairfield Osborn Preserve if the alignment through the Preserve is implemented, could interfere with the normal movement of native resident wildlife species such as deer, mountain lion, raccoon, and coyote. Smaller mammals such as black-tailed hare, skunk, and opossum can also be impeded if the lower portions of the fence have a smaller mesh size. Unless appropriately designed, fences prevent or hinder dispersal of terrestrial wildlife by creating barriers, bifurcating habitat, and restricting access to watercourses, feeding sites, and sheltering cover and can create or increase predation pressures by eliminating or minimizing escape routes. The District intends to use wildlife-friendly fencing standards to reduce the impact on wildlife migration across the properties. The possibility of interference with the free movement of wildlife or the displacement of wildlife by new trails and fences in undeveloped areas is a ***potentially significant impact***. Implementation of the following mitigation measure would reduce this impact to a ***less than significant*** level.

> ***Mitigation Measure IV-3:*** *The new trail alignment shall, to the maximum extent possible, utilize existing disturbed areas, clearings, and roads for trails, and the trail contractor shall adhere to the District's wildlife-friendly fencing standard and install, as required for property-line fencing, fencing designed to allow the movement of terrestrial wildlife. The lower portion of fences shall have a mesh size that allows smaller mammals such as black tailed hare, skunk, and opossum to easily pass through but resists feral pig movement from any property into the trail corridor.*

e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	☐	X	☐	☐

Explanation: The local Sonoma County Tree Protection Ordinance and County Agricultural Commissioner regulations addressing Sudden Oak Death are relevant to the proposed project.

The County Tree Protection Ordinance No. 4044 regulates the removal of oaks, madrone, redwood, and California bay. Douglas fir is not considered a protected tree species under this ordinance. "Protected trees" are defined as trees having a minimum trunk diameter of nine inches measured at 4.5 feet above grade. If any tree larger than nine inches diameter at breast height (DBH) are removed, according to the ordinance, protected trees are to be replaced at a 1:1 ratio, or proposed removal is not to exceed 50 percent of the protected trees on a site.

Trail construction would require that all limbs of trees adjacent to the trail alignment be trimmed to a height of ten feet to provide clearance for equestrians. In addition, the grove of redwoods and pines to the southwest of the Jacobs Ranch driveway intersection with Sonoma Mountain Road would be limbed (as mentioned in 9. Description of Project, Access Driveway to Staging Area, above), and an additional three trees east of the driveway entrance may be limbed (see Item XV.d, below). As proposed, any limbs and branches removed would be cut along the branch collar of the tree, and tree removal would be minimized along the trail alignment. Although the trail is routed to avoid mature oaks and any tree greater than nine inches in diameter as much as possible, some trees would be removed.

An inventory of all trees that would be removed, including DBH and species, was completed in May and July 2007 by District staff, as shown in Table 1, below.

Table I
Tree Removal

Species	No. of Stems <9" DBH	No. of Stems >9" DBH	% of Total
Bay	84	25	56
Oregon White Oak	29	13	29
Black Oak	16	2	4
Tanoak	6	3	7
Madrone	0	2	4
Douglas Fir/Redwood	5	0	0
Buckeye	3	0	0
Coast Live Oak	3	0	0
Toyon	6	0	0
Big Leaf Maple	0	1	2
Total:	**152**	**46**	

A total of 198 trees, including ten different species, would be removed along the Ridge Trail corridor. Of these trees, 46 are greater than nine inches in diameter. Sampling by District staff showed that stand densities of mature trees (for example, trees greater than nine inches DBH) in bay/oak woodlands along the north slope of Sonoma Mountain were between 800-1,400 stems/acre, based on random plots on two different properties along the trail corridor.

The 198 trees that would be removed include some along the 2.45 miles of the Cooper's Grove trail spur, where a total of 72 trees would be removed, of which 15 are greater than nine inches

DBH. Most of the trees are located along the young stand of oaks on the south facing slopes from the grasslands up to the Cooper's redwood grove.

Because of the nature of the forest types and the width of the trail corridor to be developed within these forests, the removal of these trees would not alter the overall species composition or vertical structure of the forest. The stands being traversed show a wide variety of age classes and healthy specimens to replace the trees at the site they would be harvested.

Tree removal would be restricted to individual trees and would not exceed 50 percent of the protected trees on the trail alignment or access facilities. Trail and bridge crossing activities would require the removal and may in the injury of trees protected by the Sonoma County Tree Protection Ordinance, which would be a ***potentially significant impact***. Implementation of the following mitigation measures would reduce this impact to a ***less than significant*** level. Mitigation Measure IV-1 calls for establishment of a reforestation site along the western border of forest in Jacobs Ranch. This site would provide sufficient room to plant the selected species and would serve as a continuation of the riparian forest between the ranch house, the parking area and the redwood grove in Jacobs Ranch.

Mitigation Measure IV-4:

For the removal of any tree protected by the Sonoma County Tree Protection Ordinance that is larger than 9 inches DBH, compensatory tree replacement shall occur at a 2:1 ratio (tree removed: tree replaced).

- *Establish a reforestation site along the western border of forest in Jacobs Ranch. 100 fifteen-gallon trees shall be planted at this site to mitigate for the 46 trees that would be removed.*

- *Species selected for reforestation shall be resistant to Sudden Oak Death (SOD), caused by the pathogen* Phytophthora ramorum. *To the extent possible, the species of replacement trees shall correspond to the trees removed.*[15]

- *Replacement trees shall be planted between November and January with nursery stock from local sources familiar with the soil types of Sonoma County. Spacing of the plants shall be nine feet by nine feet to allow the trees adequate space to grow without competition for light or nutrients. Herbaceous material around the seedlings shall be cleared during the first three years after the plans have been planted. The trees shall be irrigated for three years and protected from browsing herbivores such as deer and cattle for the first three to five years using protective sleeves and fencing. Once the seedlings have reached a height of greater than five feet, the protection shall be removed.*

[15] Despite the wide host range of *P. ramorum*, oaks in the white oak sub-genus of Quercus, including blue oak (*Q. douglassii*), valley oak (*Q. lobata*), and Oregon white oak (*Q. garryana*) do not appear to be susceptible to *P. ramorum* and SOD. No species in the white oak group have been found with the disease in the field in California, Oregon, or Europe. As such, it appears that native blue oak, valley oak, and the Oregon white oak may be suitable replacement trees to compensate for the loss of individual coast live oak, black oak, madrone, or California bay laurel trees in *P. ramorum*-infested areas.

- *Annual monitoring of the planted trees shall be conducted for five years from the time of planting. Monitoring reports shall be submitted annually to the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District.*

Mitigation Measure IV-5: *To protect existing trees during trail construction, the following mitigation measures shall be implemented:*

- *No activities that might cause damage to the root systems by earth-moving equipment shall be allowed.*

- *Temporary flagging or staking shall be placed around those trees that are near the trail but not proposed for limb removal. The temporary flagging or staking shall be installed at a distance equal to one-half of the canopy radius measured outward from the edge of the dripline. No disturbance, including grading, placement of fill material, storage of equipment, etc. shall occur within the designated protective zone for the duration of the project.*

As discussed in Item IV.a, Phytopthora ramorum *in the Sonoma Mountain Area,* native oaks have been dying in Sonoma County since 1995 due to the disease known as Sudden Oak Death (SOD), caused by the pathogen *Phytopthora ramorum.* All coastal counties where there are confirmed cases of SOD are required to follow State and federal regulations when handling or transporting *Phytophthora ramorum* host materials. These regulations address the handling and transport of horticultural plant stocks within and between counties. Although there are no specific regulations about trails use and pedestrian/equestrian access in *P. ramorum*-infested areas, there are local concerns about management and restriction of the pathogen in the Sonoma Mountain area and elsewhere in Sonoma County. Based on the current state of the science of *P. ramorum* and SOD, the only practicable control of the disease is tree removal with proper disposal of infested material and limiting the spread of fungal spores by people. Scientists have yet to address the question of whether deer, rodents, birds, and other animals might be even more effective at spreading disease spores than are people.

Infected trees should not be removed unless such trees are considered hazardous or impede trail access. Individual symptomatic trees should be monitored for symptom progression, because some diseased trees may not die. Trees with indications of wood decay or deterioration because of beetles and sap-wood rotting fungus (*Hypoxylon)* should be removed if they jeopardize access, life, or property. The structural hazard potential should be evaluated and, if necessary, those trees that pose a risk to trail users should be removed. Also, the removal of recently killed trees and brush to lessen the fire hazard potential should be considered. Removal of *Phytophora ramorum* host plant materials during trail construction or the exposure of hikers, bikers, and equestrians to the *P. ramorum* pathogen could result in the spread of SOD to offsite areas, which would be a ***potentially significant impact***. Implementation of the following mitigation measures would reduce this impact to a ***less than significant*** level.

Mitigation Measure IV-6: *If a tree needs to be removed, the tree stump shall be cut as close to the ground as practical. roots and stump can help reduce soil erosion and eliminate the need to bring in heavy equipment. The operation of vehicles or heavy equipment in such areas may facilitate disease spread or lead to soil erosion at the site. If at all practical, tree removal shall be scheduled between June to October when conditions are warm and dry, and to avoid removing diseased trees when moist conditions favor pathogen spread — November to May. A nesting survey, as described*

in Mitigation Measure IV-1, shall be completed prior to tree removal if such removals are done between February 1 and August 1.

Mitigation Measure IV-7: *Whenever possible, the tree debris shall be left on site in a safe area where large woody debris will not move, endanger the public, contaminate uninfected hosts, or constitute a fire hazard. When infected oaks are cut down and left on site, branches shall be chipped and larger wood pieces cut and split. Woodpiles shall be stacked in sunny locations to promote rapid drying. Firewood and chips shall not be left in an area where they might be transported to another location (e.g. trailside, parking areas, etc.).*

Proper disposal of infested material is an effective means of limiting pathogen spread. In infested areas, leaving P. ramorum-infected or dead trees on site has not been shown to increase the risk of infection to adjacent trees. Removal from a property is only recommended if it is the first infected tree to be detected in the area, or the fire risk is high, or if the dead tree is a safety hazard. If debris cannot be left on site, infested material shall be disposed of at an approved and permitted dump facility, such as a SOD Busters collection yard.

Mitigation Measure IV-8: *The project shall incorporate the recommendations of the California Oak Mortality Task Force and implement the following sanitation practices for those using trails or walking through Phytophthora-infected areas.*

- ***Identify infected trees within the trail corridor.***

- ***Restrictions of Recreation Activities During the Winter***

  During wet periods, Phytopthora ramorum seems to be most active and therefore most likely to start new infections. If possible, work or recreation in infested forested or shrub-covered areas shall be avoided during the wet, rainy, and cooler times of the year. Muddy conditions shall be avoided whenever possible.

- ***Management of Trail Use***

  The following information shall be prominently displayed on informational signage at the staging area at Jacobs Ranch:

  > *Trail users shall stay on established trails, respect trail closures, and park vehicles or bicycles in designated parking areas and out of the mud.*
  >
  > *The collection and transporting of wood, plants, acorns, leaves, soil or water from streams, ponds or rivers is prohibited.*
  >
  > *Carry cleaning materials in vehicles to use at the end of the trail visit. An old screwdriver, stiff brush, and towel are useful items for removing mud and other debris. An additional level of sanitation is recommended by washing hiking boots and shoes with soap and water or spraying with a disinfectant, such as Lysol© or a 10 percent bleach solution.*

- ***Recommendations for Specific Groups of Trail Users***

The following information shall be prominently displayed on informational signage at the staging area at Jacobs Ranch:

Hikers/Runners: Remove soil and plant material from your shoes, followed by a water rinse and a disinfectant. If you are frequently in and out of contaminated sites, consider committing footwear for use in that environment only.

Bicyclists: Remove soil and plant materials from your bike, shoes, and clothes. Rinse your bike and shoes with water and follow with a disinfectant.

Equestrians: Keep yourself and your horse clean by staying on established trails and out of contaminated areas. Clean any plant material and mud from the horse and its hooves with towels and brushes before leaving the site.

f)	Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?	☐	☐	☐	X

Explanation: There are no existing Habitat Conservation Plans (HCPs) or Natural Community Conservation Plans (NCCPs) in the project area; therefore, the project would not conflict with federal or state conservation plans. There would be ***no impact.***

V. CULTURAL RESOURCES

Introduction

An evaluation of potential impacts of the proposed project on cultural resources was conducted by an independent consultant,[16] and the results are presented below. The evaluation included a literature review and archaeological field inspections of the proposed project trail corridor and staging area.

Archaeological Literature Review

A literature review found that little of the proposed trail system has been the subject of previous archaeological field studies, most of which were conducted within Jack London State Historic Park or properties adjoining Sonoma Mountain Road. Recorded archaeological sites inside the Park, within the project site, or near the proposed trail include CA-SON-101 (a prehistoric site), several isolated stone artifacts at various points inside the park, and an historic complex partially recorded near Jack London State Historic Park as the "Dugout Site" and/or the "Crilly Homestead Site". Recorded in the past as SON-1564H, 1563H, and 106H, this complex may

[16] Holman & Associates, *Cultural Resources Preliminary Study for the Sonoma Mountain Ridge Trail Planning Project, Sonoma County, California,* December 2006.

actually constitute one large and diffuse historical archaeological deposit with architectural elements such as the stone wall noted in Field Inspections, below.

Field Inspections

Archaeological field inspections of the proposed project site were conducted on April 26, 2006; April 27, 2006; May 4, 2006; July 11, 2006; and November 13, 2006. The field inspections encompassed the proposed staging area and trailhead at Jacobs Ranch and the proposed trail alignment, including the two trail spurs (at Skiles Ranch and Cooper's Grove) and the two alternative trail segments (through the Wilroth/Skiles properties and the Sonoma State University property, respectively).

Most of the proposed trail alignment is too steep to have supported prehistoric habitation sites, and no bedrock (suitable for mortars, use as rock art repositories or as quarries) was observed in or adjacent to the proposed trail corridor. No historic materials were observed within the proposed trail alignment or surrounding areas.

A stone wall is located near Jack London State Historic Park. This stone wall is part of a badly defined historic complex within the Park. Partially documented in the past as SON-1564H, this complex is also associated with the location of SON-1563H and 106H, and has been described in the past as the "Dugout Site" or the "Crilly Homestead Site" (mentioned in Archaeological Literature Review, above).

The proposed trail spur is not located near SON-101, the prehistoric site mentioned in Archaeological Literature Review, above.

A single isolated chert tool was found in the southern portion of the project site, not associated with any other type of archaeological deposit. A more complex prehistoric archaeological deposit, covering an area of 25 by 100 meters, also was discovered in this vicinity. Numerous chert flakes were retrieved from the ground surface. While there does not appear to be any actual cultural deposit associated with the surface flake scatter, the abundant number of chert flakes suggests that this area was utilized as a casual quarry site and/or for the manufacture of specifically chert artifacts.

At the proposed staging area at Jacobs Ranch, cultural resources identified but not recorded which may pertain to late nineteenth and early twentieth century use include a variety of stone fences and retaining walls, split rail fences, grapestake fences, and old telephone poles. These are distributed throughout the staging area site, including north of the barn, south of the proposed overlook for persons with disabilities, and in several locations along the access driveway.

A prehistoric Native American archaeological site was identified near the proposed access road improvement project on Jacobs Ranch (identified as SON-2453). This site is comprised of midden soil containing obsidian and chert tools and debitage (sharp-edged waste material left over from creating a stone tool); bone fragments and heat-affected rock were also observed. The deposit may extend for approximately 30 meters based upon the observation of individual pieces of flaked stone. Materials were visible in patches of cleared soil. Project road improvements would be located along this section of the access driveway, potentially within the boundaries of this prehistoric archaeological site.

— Would the project:

a)	Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in §15064.5?	☐	☐	X	☐

Explanation: As discussed above, the general vicinity of the proposed trail system contains historic sites which may be affected indirectly by increased human activity in the area. These include:

1. The location of the plaque in the redwood grove on Jacobs Ranch
2. The stone wall/historic complex located near Jack London State Historic Park

These resources, and possibly others not yet identified, potentially could be damaged or destroyed by increasing human activity into an area which has had restricted access up to the present. Moving the proposed trail farther away from these resources would not guarantee that they would be protected, because hikers wander from the trail. It is possible that casual access to those areas located near the trails might occur.

Specific recommendations for the two areas listed above are identified below.

Plaque at Jacobs Ranch redwood grove (site 1). The brief inspection of the area near the plaque on Jacobs Ranch suggests that there may be additional historic components around the plaque. As mentioned in Field Inspections, above, use or improvement of this area is not proposed as part of the project; thus, there would be no impact on these potential cultural resources. However, undiscovered historic resources at this site could be disturbed by any future projects. If significant new use or change in the picnic grove is proposed in the future, a separate environmental assessment would be required at that time, including a more focused inspection of the ground inside the proposed picnic area in order to prepare State Department of Parks and Recreation site forms, and to complete a photographic baseline study of the resources there. Resource deposits should be accurately mapped so that planned improvements could be designed to avoid impacts.

Stone wall/historic complex near Jack London State Historic Park (site 2). To date, this site has been partially recorded on several different occasions for different projects. The stone wall/historic complex is located well away from the proposed trail facilities, and separated by steep topography and thick vegetation. For these reasons, it is not anticipated that construction and operation of the proposed trail would substantially increase access to this site, and the impact on the stone wall/historic complex would be ***less than significant***.

As discussed in Item I.b, above, the potential historic and architectural values of the existing main house, ranch house, and barns on the Jacobs Ranch property have not been evaluated by an architectural historian, but these structures would be retained by the project; thus, any potential historic values would not be affected. The project's impacts on these historic resources would be ***less than significant***.

Undiscovered historic resources. As mentioned in Archaeological Literature Review, above, little of the proposed trail system has been the subject of previous archaeological field studies, most of which were conducted within properties adjoining Sonoma Mountain Road or Jack London State Historic Park, which is known to have recorded resource areas within easy

walking distances of the proposed trails. For these reasons, the cultural resources consultant concluded that the project site and vicinity in general probably contain historic resources in areas which were not visited during the course of the trails survey, in addition to the specific resources identified above. It should be anticipated that some users would leave the new trail to access adjacent areas, and could discover and disturb previously unknown cultural resources. Disturbance of a previously undiscovered historic archaeological site would be considered a ***potentially significant*** impact, which would be reduced to a ***less-than-significant*** level with implementation of the following mitigation measures.

> ***Mitigation Measure V-1:*** *To protect cultural materials located off the proposed trail but inside the project site, public access shall be restricted and limited to specific areas through restrictive signage, maps, and other means, and a general surface inspection of the area of the project site to which public access is allowed by the project (excluding Jack London State Historic Park, to which public access already exists) shall be completed to identify and record previously reported and unreported historic resources (rock walls, other architectural or land alteration features, concentrations of historic debris) and prehistoric use and occupation areas such as camp sites and quarry areas. These shall be photo-documented to establish a record of their state of preservation prior to the introduction of the trail system. Annual re-inspection of these resources shall be undertaken to assess the impacts which may be caused by park visitors and to aid in the implementation of protective measures for threatened resource areas. If subsequent field investigations of any of these resources reveal that they are in fact being damaged by visitors, proactive measures shall be taken to protect them, as determined by a qualified professional archaeologist to current professional standards. Protective measures may include, but are not limited to, fencing or signage to keep people out of sensitive areas, removal of the resources for protection, burying prehistoric archaeological deposits under imported fill, and protecting prehistoric archaeological deposits by landscaping with poison oak or blackberry plants.*
>
> ***Mitigation Measure V-2:*** *The project sponsor (Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District) and construction contractors shall be prepared to respond appropriately if heretofore undetected archaeological resources are encountered anywhere in the project area.*
>
> *To set up and facilitate both the recommended monitoring in Mitigation Measure V-4 and the response procedure required under CEQA, a pre-construction meeting shall be arranged involving responsible project personnel, both onsite and managerial supervisory construction personnel, and the archaeological monitors. The purpose of this meeting will be to familiarize all involved parties with the provisions of this plan. Construction contractors shall be prepared to halt and/or relocate work while finds are identified, recorded, evaluated, and if warranted, mitigative activities carried out. In virtually all reasonably foreseeable circumstances, the appropriate mitigation action will be recording and removal of archaeological objects and data from the project area.*
>
> *The Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District will include a Native American monitor to participate in the pre-construction meeting. The District shall consult with the Native American Heritage Commission for any referral(s) for identify the most appropriate Native American monitor(s) to be invited.*
>
> *Supervisory and construction personnel shall therefore be made aware of the possibility of encountering archaeological materials in this sensitive zone. In this area, the most*

Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
☐	☐	☐	☐

common and recognizable evidence of prehistoric archaeological resources are deposits of faunal bone (deer, other mammals, etc.), usually in a dark fine-grained soil (midden); stone flakes left from manufacturing stone tools, or the tools themselves (mortars, pestles, arrowheads and spear points); and human burials, often as dislocated bones. Historic materials older than 45 years (bottles, artifacts, trash pits, structural remains, etc.) may also have scientific and cultural significance and should be more readily identified. If during the proposed construction project any such evidence is uncovered or encountered, all excavations within 10 meters/30 feet shall be halted long enough to call in the monitoring archaeologists to assess the situation and propose appropriate measures.

b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5?	☐	**X**	☐	☐

Explanation:
No prehistoric archaeological sites would be directly affected by the proposed trail alignment.

As discussed above, the general vicinity of the proposed trail system contains prehistoric sites which may be affected indirectly by increased human activity in the area. These include:

1. SON-101: prehistoric site
2. The chert flake scatter in the southern portion of the project site
3. SON-2453: prehistoric site at Jacobs Ranch

All of these resources, and possibly others not yet identified, potentially could be damaged or destroyed by increasing human activity into an area which has had restricted access up to the present. Moving the proposed trail farther away from these resources would not guarantee that they would be protected, because hikers wander from the trail. It is possible that casual access to those areas located near the trails might occur.

Specific recommendations for the three areas listed above are identified below.

SON-101 (site 1). This archaeological site is located well away from the proposed trail facilities. For this reason, it is not anticipated that construction and operation of the proposed trail would substantially increase access to this site, and the impact on SON-101 would be ***less than significant***.

Chert flake scatter in the southern portion of the project site (site 2). This site has not yet been formally recorded. Creation of the trail near this resource is a ***potentially significant*** impact, which would be reduced to a ***less-than-significant*** level with implementation of the following mitigation measure.

Mitigation Measure V-3: *The site of the chert flake scatter in the southern portion of the project site shall be recorded to current standards, including preparation of State Department of Parks and Recreation forms, a photographic baseline study of the cultural resources, and preparation of accurate maps of all resource deposits. Archaeological*

identification, inventory, evaluation, research and mitigation under provisions of CEQA shall be completely reported in a comprehensive manner, incorporating all methods used and data gained, thorough current scientific analysis of all data, and interpretation of any archaeological resources within a regional archaeological framework. Qualified professional archaeologists shall complete the report to current professional standards, and the data shall be made available to other qualified researchers following completion of the final report.

SON-2453 (site 3). Hand augering completed in December 2006 revealed a sparse layer of archaeological soils inside the area identified as SON-2453.[17] While the scatter of materials appears to be thin, construction of the proposed roadway turnouts and replacement bridge have the potential for uncovering additional unidentified significant archaeological deposits. Disturbance of a previously buried archaeological site or buried human remains would be considered a ***potentially significant*** impact, which would be reduced to a ***less-than-significant*** level with implementation of the following mitigation measures.

Mitigation Measure V-4: *All earth-disturbing activities in the vicinity of the archaeological site SON-2453 shall be monitored by a qualified archaeologist. Archaeological monitoring shall include the following, at a minimum:*

a) Timely notification prior to any excavations;

b) Monitoring during all earth-moving or soil disturbing activities, however minor, until and unless the monitor determines that no impacts to potentially significant archaeological materials will occur;

c) Specific requirements that archaeological monitors be notified immediately if potentially significant archaeological resources are encountered anywhere in the absence of an onsite monitor;

d) Authority of the onsite archaeological monitor to halt excavations if potentially significant archaeological materials or human remains are encountered;

e) Time and space to record, photograph and map, recover, retrieve, and/or remove any significant archaeological materials during the construction process;

f) Time and funding for laboratory cleaning, cataloging, analysis, and preparation for permanent curation of significant archaeological materials after onsite monitoring ends; and

g) Time and funding for a Final Report of findings, to incorporate data developed for this report as appropriate and data developed by monitoring and analysis; additional historical and/or archival research may also be warranted. In addition to reporting to the project sponsor (Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District), copies of the Final Report must be submitted to the Northwest Information Center of the California Historical Resources Information System for inclusion in the permanent archives, and another copy shall accompany any curated archaeological

[17] Holman & Associates, *Cultural Resources Preliminary Study for the Sonoma Mountain Ridge Trail Planning Project, Sonoma County, California,* December 2006.

materials and data. Archaeological data, reports, and recovered materials are and will remain the property of the property owners.

The Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District will invite the appropriate Native American monitor to monitor earth-disturbing activities in the vicinity of the archaeological site SON-2453. The District shall consult with the Native American Heritage Commission for any referral(s) for Native American monitor(s).

As part of the requirements of Mitigation Measure V-4, archaeological identification, inventory, evaluation, research and mitigation under provisions of CEQA shall be completely reported in a comprehensive manner, incorporating all methods used and data gained, thorough current scientific analysis of all data, and interpretation of any archaeological resources within a regional archaeological framework. Qualified professional archaeologists shall complete the report to current professional standards, and the data shall be made available to other qualified researchers following completion of the final report. Appropriate specialized, focused scientific analytic techniques shall be applied (e.g., radiocarbon dating, obsidian sourcing and hydration, typological studies, geomorphological studies, faunal analysis, etc.). Obtaining, analyzing, interpreting, and reporting archaeological data from the project area would serve as mitigative compensation for any project-related impacts to resources.

***Mitigation Measure V-5:** In the event that any human remains are encountered during road and/or bridge improvements, all ground–disturbing work shall cease immediately within the area specified by the archaeologist, and the County coroner must be notified immediately. If the coroner determines the remains to be Native American, the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) must be contacted within 24 hours. A qualified archaeologist, in consultation with a Most Likely Descendant named by the Native American Heritage Commission to represent the tribe in any recommendations to expose, remove and rebury the human remains and all associated grave goods, shall recommend subsequent measures for disposition of the remains.*

Undiscovered prehistoric resources. As mentioned in Archaeological Literature Review, above, little of the proposed trail system has been the subject of previous archaeological field studies, most of which were conducted within properties adjoining Sonoma Mountain Road or Jack London State Historic Park, which is known to have recorded resource areas within easy walking distances of the proposed trails. For these reasons, the cultural resources consultant concluded that the project site and vicinity in general probably contain prehistoric resources in areas which were not visited during the course of the trails survey, in addition to the specific resources identified above. It should be anticipated that some users would leave the new trail to access adjacent areas, and could discover and disturb previously unknown cultural resources. Disturbance of a previously undiscovered prehistoric archaeological site would be considered a ***potentially significant*** impact, which would be reduced to a ***less-than-significant*** level with implementation of the Mitigation Measures V-1 and V-2, above.

c) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	☐	**X**	☐	☐

Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
☐	☐	☐	☐

Explanation: Due to the limited subsurface disturbance that the project would entail, the potential for encountering paleontological resources is considered low. Nonetheless, any destruction of unique paleontological resources would be a significant impact. Implementation of the following measure would reduce this potential impact to a ***less–than–significant*** level.

> ***Mitigation Measure V-6:*** *If any paleontological resources are encountered during site grading or other construction activities, all ground disturbance shall be halted until the services of a qualified paleontologist can be retained to identify and evaluate the resource(s) and, if necessary, recommend mitigation measures to document and prevent any significant adverse effects on the resource(s).*

d) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?	☐	X	☐	☐

Explanation: As discussed in Item V.b, above, buried human remains could exist on the project site. Disturbance of buried human remains would be considered a ***potentially significant*** impact, which would be reduced to a ***less-than-significant*** level with implementation of Mitigation Measure V-3, above, which stipulates that, in the event human remains are encountered during construction, the County coroner must be notified, and if the remains are determined to be Native American, the Native American Heritage Commission must be contacted and proper procedures followed for disposition of the remains.

VI. GEOLOGY AND SOILS — Would the project:

a) Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:				
i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.	☐	☐	X	☐

Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
☐	☐	☐	☐

Explanation: The project site is not located within an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone.[18,19] The Healdsburg/Rogers Creek Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone is located approximately one mile west of the project site, and several other faults considered potentially active[20] are located within or near the project site.[21] In any event, the only structures involved in the proposed project would be the replacement of the driveway bridge over the South Fork Matanzas Creek, three or four bridges along the trail, one or two pre-fabricated restrooms, some fencing, and mapboard signs. The new bridge over the South Fork Matanzas Creek would be equally or more resistant to damage due to surface fault rupture, and the additional risk of injury due to surface fault rupture created by the new restroom(s) and trail bridges would be low. This impact would be ***less than significant***.

ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?	☐	☐	X	☐

Explanation: The proposed project site is located in the San Francisco Bay Area, a region of intense seismic activity. Recent studies by the United States Geological Survey (USGS) indicate there is a 62 percent likelihood of a Richter magnitude 6.7 or higher earthquake occurring in the Bay Area in the next 30 years. As discussed in Item VI.a.i, above, the project site is approximately one mile east of the Healdsburg/Rogers Creek Fault, and the project site could be subject to strong ground shaking in the event of an earthquake. However, as discussed in Item VI.a.i, above, the only structures involved in the proposed project would be the replacement of the driveway bridge over the South Fork Matanzas Creek, three or four bridges along the trail, one or two pre-fabricated restrooms, some fencing, and mapboard signs. The new bridge over the South Fork Matanzas Creek would reduce the risk due to seismic

[18] Alquist-Priolo Zones designate areas most likely to experience fault rupture, although surface fault rupture is not necessarily restricted those specifically zoned areas.

[19] County of Sonoma, *Sonoma County General Plan,* Adopted: March 23, 1989, First Revision to Reflect Amendments and Corrections as of April 9, 1991, Second Revision to Reflect Amendments and Corrections as of March 1, 1994, Third Revision to Reflect Amendments and Corrections as of December 31, 1998, Figures PS-1g, PS-1h, and PS-1i, viewed on http://www.sonoma-county.org/prmd/docs/gp/index.htm, 17 November 2006.

[20] An active fault is defined by the State of California as a fault that has had surface displacement within Holocene time (approximately the last 10,000 years). A potentially active fault is defined as a fault that has shown evidence of surface displacement during the Quaternary (last 1.6 million years), unless direct geologic evidence demonstrates inactivity for all of the Holocene or longer. This definition does not, of course, mean that faults lacking evidence of surface displacement are necessarily inactive. Sufficiently active is also used to describe a fault if there is some evidence that Holocene displacement occurred on one or more of its segments or branches (Hart, 1997).

[21] County of Sonoma, *Sonoma County General Plan,* Adopted: March 23, 1989, First Revision to Reflect Amendments and Corrections as of April 9, 1991, Second Revision to Reflect Amendments and Corrections as of March 1, 1994, Third Revision to Reflect Amendments and Corrections as of December 31, 1998, Figures PS-1g, PS-1h, and PS-1i, viewed on http://www.sonoma-county.org/prmd/docs/gp/index.htm, 17 November 2006.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
	☐	☐	☐	☐

ground shaking, and the additional risk of injury due to ground shaking created by the other proposed new structures would be ***less than significant***.

iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	☐	☐	X	☐

Explanation: Seismic shaking can also trigger ground-failures caused by liquefaction.[22] In general, the relative hazard, or "susceptibility," of soils and sediments to liquefaction is considered to be higher on gently sloping and nearly level alluvial landforms than in steeper uplands. The project site is not in an area with moderate or high potential for liquefaction.[23] Furthermore, as discussed in Item VI.a.i above, the only structures involved in the proposed project would be the replacement of the driveway bridge over the South Fork Matanzas Creek, which would reduce the potential for seismic damage, and three or four bridges along the trail, one or two pre-fabricated restrooms, some fencing, and mapboard signs, none of which would result in a substantial hazard due to seismic-related ground failure. This impact would be ***less-than-significant***.

iv) Landslides?	☐	☐	X	☐

Explanation: The project site includes hilly terrain with steep slopes. In the Sonoma County General Plan, the site is rated as having high or moderate potential for landslides.[24]

As discussed in 9. Description of Project, Trail Design, above, the proposed trail width is four feet, with the exception of occasional pullouts that would be up to six feet in width. Trail treads would be at a one to three percent outslope to allow for water drainage. The upslope would be sloped back to prevent cracking and erosion from uphill surface water, and the downslope would be raked out to allow accelerated revegetation. Rolling water dips and reverse grades would be installed at appropriate locations to remove surface water from the trail. As discussed in 9. Description of Project, Switchbacks, a series of approximately 11 switchbacks would be constructed on the west corridor of Cooper's Grove to avoid areas of unstable soils with a high propensity for slumping, along with two long switchbacks in the southwestern part of the Wilroth

[22] Liquefaction is the process by which saturated, loose, fine-grained, granular, soil, like sand, behaves like a dense fluid when subjected to prolonged shaking during an earthquake.

[23] County of Sonoma, *Sonoma County General Plan,* Adopted: March 23, 1989, First Revision to Reflect Amendments and Corrections as of April 9, 1991, Second Revision to Reflect Amendments and Corrections as of March 1, 1994, Third Revision to Reflect Amendments and Corrections as of December 31, 1998, Figures PS-1g, PS-1h, and PS-1i, viewed on http://www.sonoma-county.org/prmd/docs/gp/index.htm, 17 November 2006.

[24] County of Sonoma, *Sonoma County General Plan,* Adopted: March 23, 1989, First Revision to Reflect Amendments and Corrections as of April 9, 1991, Second Revision to Reflect Amendments and Corrections as of March 1, 1994, Third Revision to Reflect Amendments and Corrections as of December 31, 1998, Figures PS-1g, PS-1h, and PS-1i, viewed on http://www.sonoma-county.org/prmd/docs/gp/index.htm, 17 November 2006.

Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
☐	☐	☐	☐

Property. Because of the steepness of the slopes along this section of terrain, sutter walls (a type of retaining wall) would be required to support many of the corners of the switchbacks and to protect tree root balls along the trail tread. Sutter walls would not exceed four feet in height with the exception of locations near bridge abutments. Similarly, a spur trail is proposed to descend from the southern portion of the Cooper's Grove property along the eastern boundary into the southern limits of the redwood grove. This route would require approximately 19 switchbacks with some retaining walls to support the corners. Finally, the Bennett Valley overlook would include three long switchbacks and some sutter walls. The trail route is designed to avoid areas where geologic slumping has occurred or is likely to occur. The trail grade would be between seven and ten percent along most of its alignment, with a maximum grade of ten percent. These project design features would facilitate drainage and prevent buildup of water-saturated soil in sloped areas of the trail that could increase risk of landslides.

Most of the proposed access facilities, including the driveway improvements, new bridge, parking area, and related trailhead and overlook facilities, would be constructed in relatively flat areas where the risk of landslide is low. In sloped areas where there is some risk of landslide, the potential impact on safety and property would be negligible because of the low intensity of use and improvement. As a precaution, the proposed project includes a new culvert and engineered fill to be placed in an area east of the main house to protect a steep and potentially unstable slope below a portion of the road.

Due to these design features, as well as the limited grading necessary to build the proposed trail and access facilities, the project would not contribute significantly to the existing risk of landslides, nor would use of the trail expose users to a significant additional risk of injury due to landslide. The effect of landslides would be a ***less than significant*** impact.

b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	☐	X	☐	☐

Explanation: Erosion and loss of topsoil could occur at the site during construction of the trail, and access facilities including the parking area, loop access road, new turnouts on the existing driveway, new driveway bridge, handicapped-only overlook parking, and loop driveway and parking for the ranch house.

During construction of the trail, staging area, and access road improvements plastic "Drift Fencing" would be installed on the downhill side of the trail to catch loose debris and protect the trail from erosion and mud flows. The fence would remain in place until the ground is stabilized. Slope cuts would be sloped back to prevent cracking, or erosion from uphill surface water. To prevent slipping and cracking during the rainy season and allow for accelerated native plant growth, trail crews would rake down and spread the "overburden" (the fill that is created by the digging of the trail machine.) Trail workers would physically remove earth in the steep slide-slope areas and deposit the fill in safe areas. Down-slope fills would be raked out to allow accelerated native re-vegetation growth. Rolling water dips and reverse grades would be installed at appropriate locations to remove surface water from the trail.

Construction would occur during the dry season, when the potential for erosion from unfinished surfaces would be low.

Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
☐	☐	☐	☐

The construction timing and procedures discussed above would reduce the potential for erosion during construction. In any event, the project sponsor would be required by the California Regional Water Quality Control Board to create a storm water pollution prevention plan (SWPPP) that incorporates best management practices (BMPs) during construction activities to minimize soil erosion hazard during construction activities, as discussed in VIII. Hydrology and Water Quality, item VIII.a, Mitigation Measure VIII-1. The project may also be required to obtain a grading permit from the Sonoma County Permit and Resource Management Department. Soil erosion and/or loss of topsoil during construction and grading activities would be a ***potentially significant*** impact which would be reduced to a ***less-than-significant*** level with implementation of the following mitigation measure, which stipulates development and implementation of a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) containing, among other elements, erosion and sedimentation control practices, including soils stabilization, revegetation, and runoff control to limit increases in sediment in storm water runoff, such as detention basins, straw bales, silt fences, check dams, geofabrics, drainage swales, and sandbag dikes.

Mitigation Measure VI-1: *Implement Mitigation Measure VIII-1.*

During the first rainy season after construction, high impact users such as mountain bikes and horses may be prohibited, to allow the trail to cure. After curing, the trail tread would consolidate and have a lower erosion potential than a newly constructed surface. As discussed above, the trail would incorporate rolling water dips and reverse grades at appropriate locations to remove surface water from the trail. The three or four bridges along the trail would be set on concrete abutments, with heights sufficient to allow the 100-year flood event in the stream channel. At the approximately 11 or 12 other crossings where the topography of the stream corridors allow a gentle approach and exit into the stream channel, crossings of native rock, including rock-lined inlets and energy dissipaters also made with rock, would be installed. After one winter season, the trail contractor would be asked to return and do a one-time maintenance performance along the entire route to repair any trail infrastructure that failed.

The existing corral area at Jacobs Ranch would be utilized for the new parking area, and would be re-graded closer to the original natural contours. Once it is re-graded, it would be surfaced with compacted base rock, as would be the new loop access road for the parking area, loop driveway and parking for the ranch house, turnouts on the driveway, and the wheelchair access-only overlook parking area. The existing corral access road between the ranch house and the barn would be closed and restored to grassland. In its place, access from the existing ranch house to the barn would be provided by a new pathway routed through the parking area, which would have less unvegetated area than the existing access road.

The new driveway bridge across the South Fork Matanzas Creek would have a wider span to eliminate the constriction of the creek by the existing bridge abutments. The steep straight portion of the driveway would be given a new aggregate base and asphalt concrete (AC) pavement. The material that has sloughed off the cutbank would be removed, and the V-ditch on each side would be cleaned out and be given rock armoring.

The ditches and culverts between the main house and the ranch house would receive maintenance as required, and at least one new culvert would be installed.

Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
☐	☐	☐	☐

The potential for erosion from operation of the trail and access facilities would be a ***potentially significant*** impact. The project design and maintenance procedures described above, which would leave no large unvegetated or unsurfaced areas that would be susceptible to substantial erosion, in combination with implementation of the following mitigation measure, would reduce this impact to a ***less than significant*** level.

> ***Mitigation Measure VI-2:*** *Trail management of the North Slope Sonoma Mountain Ridge Trail shall contain the following management procedures:*
>
> - *Annual trail maintenance shall include brushing the trail corridor each fall to reduce vegetation growth into the trail travelway. The trail tread and drainage structures shall be maintained each fall to prepare the trail for the winter. After the winter storms, the trail shall be checked as soon as feasible to make any repairs needed.*
>
> - *During operation, the District or facility manager may enact temporary closure to public use due to weather, mud flows, high fire hazard, or other safety concerns or adverse conditions.*

c)	Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse?	☐	☐	**X**	☐

Explanation: The segment of trail ascending the western border of Coopers Grove includes areas of potential soil instability. The open grasslands on the mid region of Coopers Grove are found on unstable soils with a high propensity for slumping. In this section, the objective for trail routing was to avoid undulating soils. Where the trail leaves Coopers Grove and enters the Sonoma Mountain Woodlands property, it passes through steep terrain on soil types amenable to the construction of a stable trail tread with adequate drainage, but farther east, the trail crosses open grassland with a soil type and topography having a high propensity for slumping. In this area, the trail is designed to pass below the toe of the most prominent slump. As discussed in Items VI.a.i, VI.a.ii, VI.a.iii, and VI.a.iv, above, the project, including design features to avoid unstable areas, would have a less ***than significant impact*** on unstable soils.

d)	Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial risks to life or property?	☐	☐	**X**	☐

Explanation: See Items VI.a.ii and VI.a.iii, above.

e)	Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the	☐	☐	☐	**X**

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
	☐	☐	☐	☐

disposal of wastewater?

Explanation: The new restroom at the parking area would be a pump-out vault toilet. The project would not involve the installation of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems, and would therefore have ***no impact*** on soils related to septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems.

VII. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS — *Would the project:*

a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	☐	X	☐	☐

Explanation: The operation and use of the proposed trail and access facilities would not involve the transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials, and this impact would be ***less than significant***.

Construction activities would require the use of certain hazardous materials such as fuels, oils, solvents, and glues. Inadvertent release of large quantities of these materials into the environment could adversely impact soil, surface waters, or groundwater quality. On-site storage and/or use of large quantities of materials capable of impacting soil and groundwater would not typically be required for a project of the size and type proposed. However, the ***potentially significant*** risk associated with hazardous materials used during construction would be reduced to a ***less-than-significant*** level with implementation of the following mitigation measure, which stipulates development and implementation of a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) including provisions for control of potentially hazardous construction materials.

Mitigation Measure VII-1: *Implement Mitigation Measure VIII-1.*

b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?	☐	☐	X	☐

Explanation: As discussed in Item VII.a, above, operation of the proposed trail would not involve use of hazardous materials, and there is no significant risk of upset or accident conditions releasing hazardous materials into the environment during trail operation.

Small amounts of hazardous materials (oil, gasoline, etc.) may be temporarily located onsite during construction activities. Most of the materials are consumed through use, resulting in relatively little waste. As discussed in 9. Description of Project, Construction Methods, Fire Safety and Erosion Control, above, under the construction Fire Safety Plan, the trail contractor would bring only the necessary amount of fuel and fuel mixtures to operate the machinery on site. No flammable products would be stored or left within the trail corridor. The trail contractor would report immediately any spill of contaminants to the District and the contractor would be

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
	☐	☐	☐	☐

solely responsible for any clean-up of such contaminants in compliance with all applicable local, state, and federal laws. For these reasons, this impact would be ***less than significant.***

c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	☐	☐	☐	**X**

Explanation: There are no existing or proposed schools within one-quarter mile of the project site. The project would have ***no impact***.

d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?	☐	☐	☐	**X**

Explanation: The project site is not on the Hazardous Waste and Substances Sites (Cortese) List compiled by the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5. The project would have ***no impact***.

e) For a project within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?	☐	☐	☐	**X**

Explanation: The project site is not located within two miles of a public or public use airport. There would be ***no impact***.

f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?	☐	☐	☐	**X**

Explanation: The project site is not located within the vicinity of a private airstrip. There would be ***no impact***.

g) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	☐	☐	☐	**X**

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
	☐	☐	☐	☐

Explanation: The project would not interfere with any roadways or other emergency access-ways. Therefore, it would not establish any barrier that would interfere with any adopted emergency response or evacuation plan. There would be ***no impact.***

h) Expose people or structures to significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?	☐	X	☐	☐

Explanation: The project site is in an area of very high or high potential of wildland fires.[25] Trail construction could increase risk of wildland fire. As described in 9. Description of Project, Construction Methods, Fire Safety and Erosion Control, above, the District would ensure the contractor(s) develop a Fire Safety Plan and obtain approval from all emergency response agencies prior to beginning construction. The construction Fire Safety Plan would address:

- Procedures for reporting a fire.
- Personnel and fire safety equipment the contractor would have on site, e.g. Nomex, fire tents, etc.
- Procedures to be taken on 'red flag days' (days of extreme fire danger.) On red flag days, trail construction would be discontinued.
- Procedures to ensure that all power equipment is fire safe.
- Training to be given contractor's employees regarding fire safety.
- The contractor would bring only the necessary amount of fuel and fuel mixtures to operate the machinery on site. No flammable products would be stored or left on site. The contractor would report immediately any spill of contaminants to the District and the contractor would be solely responsible for any clean-up of such contaminants in compliance with all applicable local state and federal laws.
- All power equipment used on trail would have spark arrestors.
- The contractor would have fire extinguishers and five gallon water pumps on site when operating power equipment.
- A trail map clearly indicating emergency vehicle access points and logical landmarks for visitors to use to accurately describe their location within the trail corridor. This map would be shared with emergency service providers for review and input.

Implementation of these procedures would reduce the risk of construction-related fire to a ***less than significant*** level.

After construction, use of the trail and access facilities would increase public access to grassland and woodland areas, which could increase the risk of wildland fire. As discussed in 9. Description of Project, Staging Area Operation, the access facilities would be subject to closure

[25] County of Sonoma, *Sonoma County General Plan,* Adopted: March 23, 1989, First Revision to Reflect Amendments and Corrections as of April 9, 1991, Second Revision to Reflect Amendments and Corrections as of March 1, 1994, Third Revision to Reflect Amendments and Corrections as of December 31, 1998, Figures PS-1g, PS-1h, and PS-1i, viewed on http://www.sonoma-county.org/prmd/docs/gp/index.htm, 20 November 2006.

Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
☐	☐	☐	☐

in the case of special conditions such as high fire danger. No fires would be allowed except barbeques by special arrangement in conjunction with public events. No smoking would be allowed in any of the public areas. Furthermore, public use of trails and access facilities at the adjacent Jack London State Historic Park has not resulted in a significant increase in wildland fire hazard. Nevertheless, the impact of trail and access facility operation on wildland fires would be a ***potentially significant*** impact, would be reduced to a ***less than significant*** level by implementation of the following mitigation measure, which stipulates, among other management provisions, that the trail may be temporarily closed due to high fire hazard.

> ***Mitigation Measure VII-2:*** *Prior to operation, the District or facility manager shall prepare and implement an operational Fire Safety Plan, which shall include provisions for temporary closure to public use due to high fire hazard. The operational Fire Safety Plan shall be reviewed by local emergency service providers and responsible agencies.*
>
> *The Fire Safety Plan shall address:*
>
> - *Procedures for reporting a fire.*
> - *Training to be given operator's employees regarding fire safety.*
> - *Procedures to be taken on 'red flag days' (days of extreme fire danger.) On red flag days, trail use would be prohibited.*
> - *Fire safety equipment the operator would have on site, e.g. Nomex, fire tents, fire extinguishers, five gallon water pumps, etc.*
> - *Procedures to ensure that any power equipment used on the project site is fire safe, and is equipped with spark arrestors.*
> - *A trail map clearly indicating emergency vehicle access points and logical landmarks for visitors to use to accurately describe their location within the trail corridor. This map would be shared with emergency service providers for review and input.*

VIII. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY — Would the project:

a)	Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?	☐	**X**	☐	☐

Explanation: Clearing of existing vegetation, exposure of soil, grading, and the movement of soil during construction of the proposed trail and access facilities would increase erosion potential, which could result in increased sedimentation and turbidity in the South Fork Matanzas Creek and downstream surface waters. Fuels, lubricants, and other toxic materials used during construction, if spilled or disposed of improperly, also could enter and contaminate surface waters. Without mitigation, these impacts could be ***potentially significant***.

Because project construction would disturb more than one acre, storm water discharge originating from the project site during construction activities is subject to regulation under the United States Environmental Protection Agency's (US EPA) National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) program. As required by NPDES regulations, the project applicant would apply for coverage under the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) General Construction Permit, and subsequently prepare and implement a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP), as described in Mitigation Measure VIII-1, below. The objectives of

Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
☐	☐	☐	☐

a SWPPP are to identify pollutant sources that may affect the quality of storm water discharge and implement best management practices (BMPs) to reduce and potentially eliminate pollutants carried by storm water runoff. The SWPPP therefore contains specific actions for handling and storage of construction materials and equipment, site grading activities, soil stabilization and post-construction runoff, monitoring, and reporting activities at the project site. SWPPP measures are especially important during construction phases requiring grading and during periods of heavy precipitation.

The project may also be required to obtain a grading permit from the Sonoma County Permit and Resource Management Department.

The Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) has recently implemented regulations implementing section C.3 of the RWQCB's NPDES permit governing discharges from the municipal storm drain systems of Sonoma County and its cities and towns. These new requirements pertain to operational erosion and sediment control, and are separate from, and in addition to, the construction-related requirements described above. The C.3 program requires preparation of a Stormwater Control Plan to address operational (as opposed to construction) runoff from sites that create or replace over 10,000 square feet of impervious area. Because the proposed project would create less than 10,000 square feet of impervious area, the C.3 requirements are not applicable.

As discussed in Item VI.b, above, construction would occur during the dry season, when the soil is dry enough to avoid mud. The design of the project includes erosion control features and construction erosion control measures (discussed in Item VI.b, above), which, along with the control measures for fuel described in Item VII.b, above, and implementation of the SWPPP, as specified in Mitigation Measure VIII-1, would reduce potential water quality impacts associated with construction activities to a ***less-than-significant*** level.

> ***Mitigation Measure VIII-1:*** *The project applicant shall develop and implement a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) for construction of the proposed project, as required by the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) and Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB). The SWPPP shall include, at a minimum, the following elements:*
>
> - *Source identification;*
> - *Preparation of a site map;*
> - *Description of construction materials, practices, and equipment storage and maintenance;*
> - *List of pollutants likely to contact storm water;*
> - *Estimate of the construction site area and percent impervious area;*
> - *Erosion and sedimentation control practices, including soils stabilization, revegetation, and runoff control to limit increases in sediment in storm water runoff, such as detention basins, straw bales, silt fences, check dams, geofabrics, drainage swales, and sandbag dikes;*

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
	☐	☐	☐	☐

- *Proposed construction dewatering plans;*
- *List of provisions to eliminate or reduce discharge of materials to storm water;*
- *Description of waste management practices; and*
- *Maintenance and training practices.*

After construction, the operation of the proposed project could result in an incremental increase in pollutants from parking-lot runoff, and the possible use of landscaping herbicides, pesticides, and/or fertilizer potentially associated with future residential use of the main house and ranch house at Jacobs Ranch, but this is not anticipated to be substantial. As described in Item VI.b. above, project design and maintenance procedures, in combination with implementation Mitigation Measure VI-2, above, would reduce the potential for erosion from operation of the trail and access facilities to a ***less than significant*** level.

b) Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level that would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)?	☐	☐	**X**	☐

Explanation: The proposed trail would be unpaved, and the parking area, loop access road, driveway turnouts, handicapped-only overlook parking, and loop road and parking at the ranch house would be surfaced with base rock. This would not create additional impervious surfaces and would not interfere with groundwater recharge. The one or two restrooms would have small footprints and be surrounded by large pervious areas, and the paving of the neighboring driveway apron at Sonoma Mountain Road, the steep straight portion of the driveway, and the two handicapped spaces in the staging area also would be small in area and adjacent to large pervious areas; both of these project components would have a negligible impact on groundwater recharge. Neither construction nor operation of the trail and access facilities would use substantial amounts of groundwater, and this impact would be ***less than significant***.

c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?	☐	**X**	☐	☐

Explanation: The proposed trail and access facilities would not substantially alter natural drainage patterns, and would add no significant impervious surfaces. As discussed in 9. Description of Project, Staging Area at Jacobs Ranch, the existing corral at Jacobs Ranch would be regraded closer to its original natural contours, but this would not substantially affect

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
	☐	☐	☐	☐

drainage patterns at the site. As discussed in Item VI.b, above, the project design includes measures to control potential erosion during and after construction. The proposed replacement of the Jacobs Ranch vehicular bridge on the access road would improve the natural features and performance of the stream channel. These project design features, along with implementation of the following mitigation measure, which stipulates erosion control measures during construction, would reduce this impact to a ***less-than-significant*** level:

Mitigation Measure VIII-2: *Implement Mitigation Measure VIII-1.*

d) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site?	☐	☐	X	☐

Explanation: The proposed unpaved trail and base rock-surfaced access facilities, incorporating erosion control measures, would not substantially alter existing drainage patterns (see discussion in Item VIII.c, above), and the impact on the rate and amount of downstream flows would be ***less than significant.***

e) Create or contribute runoff water that would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?	☐	☐	X	☐

Explanation: See Items VIII.a and VIII.d, above.

f) Otherwise substantially degrade water quality?	☐	X	☐	☐

Explanation: Effects on water quality from surface contaminants are a ***potentially significant*** impact that would be reduced to a ***less-than-significant*** level with implementation of Mitigation Measure VIII-1, above.

g) Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map?	☐	☐	☐	X

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
	☐	☐	☐	☐

Explanation: The project would retain the existing main house and ranch house at the Jacobs Ranch property, but does not propose construction of any new housing. In any event, the project site is located outside of the mapped 100-year floodplain.[26] There would be ***no impact***.

h) Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures which would impede or redirect flood flows? ☐ ☐ **X** ☐

Explanation: The new driveway bridge on the South Fork Matanzas Creek would have more widely spaced abutments that would eliminate the constriction of the creek by the existing bridge abutments. The three or four bridges along the trail would be set on concrete abutments with heights sufficient to allow the 100-year flood event in the stream channel. The project would not involve any other substantial structures that could impede or redirect flood flows. Furthermore, as discussed in Item VIII.g, the project site is not within a mapped 100-year flood plain. Therefore, this impact would be ***less than significant.***

i) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam? ☐ ☐ ☐ **X**

Explanation: There are no dams, levees, or other sources of floodwaters upstream of the project site. The project would have ***no impact***.

j) Inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow? ☐ ☐ **X** ☐

Explanation: Tsunamis (seismic sea waves) are long-period waves that are typically caused by underwater disturbances (landslides), volcanic eruptions, or seismic events. The site is not within the area subject to potential inundation by tsunamis. [27]

A seiche is a free or standing wave oscillation(s) of the surface of water in an enclosed or semi-

[26] County of Sonoma, *Sonoma County General Plan,* Adopted: March 23, 1989, First Revision to Reflect Amendments and Corrections as of April 9, 1991, Second Revision to Reflect Amendments and Corrections as of March 1, 1994, Third Revision to Reflect Amendments and Corrections as of December 31, 1998, Figures PS-1g, PS-1h, and PS-1i, viewed on http://www.sonoma-county.org/prmd/docs/gp/index.htm, 20 November 2006.

[27] County of Sonoma, *Sonoma County General Plan,* Adopted: March 23, 1989, First Revision to Reflect Amendments and Corrections as of April 9, 1991, Second Revision to Reflect Amendments and Corrections as of March 1, 1994, Third Revision to Reflect Amendments and Corrections as of December 31, 1998, Figures PS-1g, PS-1h, and PS-1i, viewed on http://www.sonoma-county.org/prmd/docs/gp/index.htm, 20 November 2006.

Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
☐	☐	☐	☐

enclosed basin, such as San Francisco Bay, that may be initiated by an earthquake.[28] Due to the site's distance from the Bay and other large bodies of water, it would not be affected by a seiche.

Although the project site includes steep terrain (see Item VI.a.iv, above), and small landslides could occur, there are no potential sources of large mudflows that could inundate the project site.

For the reasons discussed above, the risk of inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow would be a ***less than significant*** impact.

IX. LAND USE AND PLANNING — Would the project:

a)	Physically divide an established community?	☐	☐	**X** ☐

Explanation: As discussed in 11. Surrounding Land Uses and Setting, above, the vicinity of the project site is a rural area containing low-density rural residential uses, open space, and Jack London State Historic Park (JLSHP).

The proposed trail and access facilities would be similar to the existing trails and public access facilities at JLSHP, the eastern terminus of the proposed trail. The proposed trail (which would be restricted to non-motorized uses) and access facilities would be compatible with the open space and low-density residential uses elsewhere in the vicinity of the proposed project.

Use of the trail and access facilities would generate additional vehicle traffic, but as discussed in Item XV.a, below, this impact would be small and less than significant. Consequently, noise, odors, and visual impacts associated with this additional traffic would also be limited, and are not anticipated to exceed levels that currently exist in the area. The Sonoma County General Plan designates the project site as either Diverse Agriculture or Resources and Rural Development, or Public/Quasi-Public, in which the proposed trail and access facilities would be considered an appropriate use.

The proposed project would be constructed within the existing pattern of roads, and would not substantially interfere with surrounding land uses, which would continue to interrelate as before. The project would not physically divide any established community.

The proposed trail and access facilities would not introduce a new use to the area, as similar facilities already exist at JLSHP.

For these reasons, the proposed project would be compatible with nearby land uses, and this impact would be ***less than significant***.

[28] The 'sloshing' produced by seiches within enclosed water bodies commonly occurs during earthquakes on a small scale in swimming pools.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
b) Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to, the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	☐	☐	X	☐

Explanation:

The project site is within the unincorporated area of Sonoma County and is subject to the provisions of the Sonoma County General Plan adopted in 1989. The General Plan is currently being updated, but the 1989 General Plan is currently in effect and will remain so until the update is adopted.

General Plan Land Use Designation

The Jacobs Ranch, Cooper's Grove (southern portion), Sonoma Mountain Woodlands, Wilroth, Skiles fee portion, and Sonoma State University properties are designated as Resources and Rural Development in the General Plan Land Use Element. This land use category emphasizes protection of natural resources, with minimal residential development, or development of public facilities. Permitted uses in this land use category include "Lodging, campgrounds, and similar recreational and visitor serving uses provided that they shall not be inconsistent with the purpose and intent of this category".[29]

The northern portion of the Cooper's Grove property is designated Diverse Agriculture. The primary purpose of this land use category is to protect a full range of agricultural uses and to limit further residential intrusion consistent with the policies of the Agricultural Resources Element. Permitted land uses include "campgrounds with a maximum of 30 sites".[30]

Jack London State Historic Park is designated Public/Quasi-Public. This category provides sites which serve the community or public need and are owned or operated by government agencies, non profit entities, or public utilities. Permitted land uses include schools, churches, libraries, governmental administration centers, fire stations, cemeteries, airports, hospitals, sewage treatment plants, waste disposal sites, etc.[31]

[29] County of Sonoma, *Sonoma County General Plan,* Adopted: March 23, 1989, First Revision to Reflect Amendments and Corrections as of April 9, 1991, Second Revision to Reflect Amendments and Corrections as of March 1, 1994, Third Revision to Reflect Amendments and Corrections as of December 31, 1998, Land Use Element, Policy 2.8.1, Resources and Rural Development Areas.

[30] County of Sonoma, *Sonoma County General Plan,* Adopted: March 23, 1989, First Revision to Reflect Amendments and Corrections as of April 9, 1991, Second Revision to Reflect Amendments and Corrections as of March 1, 1994, Third Revision to Reflect Amendments and Corrections as of December 31, 1998, Land Use Element, Policy 2.7.3 Policy for Diverse Agricultural Areas.

[31] County of Sonoma, *Sonoma County General Plan,* Adopted: March 23, 1989, First Revision to Reflect Amendments and Corrections as of April 9, 1991, Second Revision to Reflect Amendments and Corrections as of March 1, 1994, Third Revision to Reflect Amendments and Corrections as of December 31, 1998, Land Use Element, Policy 2.5 Public and Quasi-Public Land Use Policy.

The proposed regional trail development and small staging area would presumably fall into the above definitions of permitted uses in the Resources and Rural Development, Diverse Agriculture, and Public/Quasi-Public designations, given that they have a similar purpose, but involve far less development, than other visitor-serving, campground, or public uses. The only structures anticipated for the proposed project are the replacement of the existing driveway bridge, three or four trail bridges, one or two simple pre-fabricated restrooms, some fencing, and mapboard signs to orient visitors. Therefore, the proposed project would be considered consistent with the land use designations of the General Plan.

General Plan Policies

The Open Space Element of the General Plan includes designated Scenic Landscape Units and Scenic Corridors. The Jacobs Ranch and the other properties along the trail corridor are part of a Scenic Landscape Unit that is within the Sonoma Valley Planning Area, but the Unit crosses over into the Rohnert Park-Cotati and Environs Planning Area, which starts immediately to the southwest. Most of the policies regarding Scenic Landscape Units are specific to residential development and subdivisions, but the following policies pertain to any structures or types of development:[32]

> ***Goal OS-2:*** *Retain the largely open, scenic character of important scenic landscape units.*
>
> > ***Objective OS-2.1:*** *Retain a rural, scenic character in scenic landscape units with very low intensities of development. Avoid their inclusion within spheres of influence for public service providers.*
> >
> > ***Objective OS-2.2:*** *Provide opportunities for consideration of additional development in scenic landscape units in exchange for permanent open space preservation.*
> >
> > *The following policies in addition to those of the Land Use Element shall be used to accomplish the above objectives:*
> >
> > ***OS-2e:*** *Require that new structures meet the following criteria:*
> > *1) they are sited below exposed ridgelines*
> > *2) they use natural landforms and existing vegetation to screen them from view from public roads. On exposed sites, screening with native, fire retardant plants may be required.*
> > *3) cuts and fills are discouraged and where practical, driveways are screened from public view.*
> > *4) utilities are undergrounded where economically practical.*

[32] County of Sonoma, *Sonoma County General Plan,* Adopted: March 23, 1989, First Revision to Reflect Amendments and Corrections as of April 9, 1991, Second Revision to Reflect Amendments and Corrections as of March 1, 1994, Third Revision to Reflect Amendments and Corrections as of December 31, 1998, Open Space Element, Policy 2.2, Scenic Landscape Units.

Sonoma Mountain Road is designated as a Scenic Corridor. The Open Space Element includes the following objective and policies regarding Scenic Corridors:[33]

> ***Objective OS-3.2:*** *Provide guidelines so future land uses, development and roadway construction are compatible with the preservation of scenic values along designated scenic highway corridors.*
>
> *The County shall use the following policies to achieve these objectives:*
>
> > ***OS-3a:*** *Apply the Scenic Resources combining district to those portions of properties within scenic corridor setbacks.*
> >
> > ***OS-3b:*** *For development on parcels located both within scenic landscape units and adjacent to scenic corridors, apply the more restrictive siting and setback policies to preserve visual quality.*
> >
> > ***OS-3c:*** *Establish a rural scenic corridor setback of 30 percent of the depth of the lot to a maximum of 200 feet from the centerline of the road unless a different setback is provided in the planning area policies of the Land Use Element.*

These policies apply to structures, and to "development," which could be interpreted to include the proposed small parking area, associated restroom(s), and trail.

The Open Space Element also has policies that support the implementation of the proposed trail and staging area use:

> ***Goal OS-7:*** *Establish a countywide park and trail system which meets future recreational needs of the county's residents while protecting agricultural uses. The emphasis of the trail system should be near urban areas and on public lands.*
>
> > ***Objective OS-7.1:*** *Provide for adequate parklands and trails primarily in locations that are convenient to urban areas to meet the outdoor recreation needs of the population, while not affecting agricultural uses.*
> >
> > *The County shall use the following policies to achieve this objective:*
> >
> > > ***OS-7a:*** *Apply the "Public-Quasi Public/Park" designation to all existing local, county, and state parklands.*

The General Plan provides policies for defined uses including lodges, campgrounds, RV parks, golf courses and other more intensely developed public recreational facilities, which could be interpreted to apply to low-intensity public recreational facilities such as trails and associated staging areas. The proposed project is sited and designed such that the improvements would generally not be visible from off the site. Given that the visibility of project improvements would be minimal, and presuming that the policies regarding more intensely developed recreational

[33] County of Sonoma, *Sonoma County General Plan,* Adopted: March 23, 1989, First Revision to Reflect Amendments and Corrections as of April 9, 1991, Second Revision to Reflect Amendments and Corrections as of March 1, 1994, Third Revision to Reflect Amendments and Corrections as of December 31, 1998, Open Space Element, Policy 2.3, Scenic Corridors.

facilities also apply to the proposed project, the project would be considered consistent with the policies of the Open Space Element regarding Scenic Landscape Units and Scenic Corridors.

Zoning

The General Plan, discussed in General Plan Land Use Designation, above, establishes intended land use types, while the Zoning Ordinance sets forth specific details and standards for land use. By law zoning is required to follow and be consistent with the General Plan. The project properties are zoned RRD (Resources and Rural Development)[34], RRD/WA (Resources and Rural Development-Williamson Act)[35], DA (Diverse Agriculture)[36], or Public Facilities (PF).[37]

The RRD district is intended to implement the provisions of the Resources and Rural Development land use category of the General Plan, namely to provide protection of lands needed for commercial timber production, geothermal production, aggregate resources production; lands needed for protection of watershed, fish and wildlife habitat, biotic resources, and for agricultural production activities that are not subject to all of the policies contained in the Agricultural Resources Element of the General Plan. The RRD district is also intended to allow very low density residential development and recreational and visitor-serving uses where compatible with resource use and available public services. Conditionally permitted uses permitted in the RRD zone include one that could be interpreted to apply to the proposed trail and staging area:[38]

> *(cc) Recreational vehicle parks, tent camps or campgrounds, lodging and other recreational or visitor serving uses which do not interfere or detract from the purposes of this district;*

Past practice in the County has exempted low-intensity facilities such as trails and associated staging areas from the use permit requirements that would apply to intensive public recreation facilities.

Although "Lodging, campgrounds, and similar recreational and visitor serving uses" are defined as permitted uses in the corresponding General Plan land use designation, these uses are not included as permitted uses in the Resources and Rural Development-Williamson Act (RRD/WA) zoning district. The Zoning Ordinance does allow some latitude for the Planning Director to find uses that are not otherwise categorized to be permitted uses:[39]

> *(dd) Other nonresidential uses which in the opinion of the planning director are of a similar and compatible nature to those uses described in this section.*

[34] Sonoma County Code, Chapter 26 Sonoma County Zoning Regulations, Article 10.

[35] Sonoma County Code, Chapter 26 Sonoma County Zoning Regulations, Article 12.

[36] Sonoma County Code, Chapter 26 Sonoma County Zoning Regulations, Article 8.

[37] Sonoma County Code, Chapter 26 Sonoma County Zoning Regulations, Article 52.

[38] Sonoma County Code, Chapter 26 Sonoma County Zoning Regulations, Article 10, Section 26-10-020.

[39] Sonoma County Code, Chapter 26 Sonoma County Zoning Regulations, Article 12, Section 26-12-010.

In the Diverse Agriculture (DA) zone, "Public parks" are principally permitted uses[40], and the following uses are conditionally permitted:[41]

> *(n)(4) Campgrounds with a maximum of thirty (30) sites, provided that the subject area is not under a Williamson Act contract and subject, at a minimum, to the criteria of general plan Policy AR-6e.*

General Plan Policy Goal AR-6 states "Allow new visitor serving uses and facilities in some agricultural areas but limit them in scale and location…" subject to a set of policies which include Policy AR-6e:

> *Policy AR-6e: Follow these guidelines for approval of recreational uses in agricultural areas, such as bed and breakfast inns or campgrounds:*
>
> *1) the use is compatible with any agricultural activity or existing residential use in the area.*
>
> *2) the use will not require the extension of sewer or water.*
>
> *3) all potential conflicts are mitigated to the satisfaction of the County.*

[40] Sonoma County Code, Chapter 26 Sonoma County Zoning Regulations, Article 8, Section 26-08-010, (i)(8).

[41] Sonoma County Code, Chapter 26 Sonoma County Zoning Regulations, Article 8, Section 26-08-020.

Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
☐	☐	☐	☐

For the Diverse Agriculture (DA) zone, the Zoning Ordinance also contains a provision allowing latitude for the Planning Director to find uses that are not otherwise categorized to be permitted uses:[42]

> *(m) Other nonresidential uses which in the opinion of the planning director are of a similar and compatible nature to those uses described in this section.*

In the Public Facilities (PF) zone, conditionally permitted uses include "Park and recreational facilities, including publicly owned golf courses", and principally permitted uses include:[43]

> *(l) Other nonresidential uses which in the opinion of the planning director are of a similar and compatible nature to those uses described in this section.*

Thus, the current zoning ordinance does not specifically permit low-intensity public recreational facilities such as trails and associated staging areas in the RRD, RRD/WA, DA, and PF zones. The closest defined uses are more intensely developed facilities such as public parks, recreational vehicle parks, tent camps, campgrounds, and lodging. These uses would be more extensive and intensive than the proposed trail and staging area project; thus, the latter would be considered consistent with such permitted uses.

Consequently, no conflicts were identified relative to the General Plan and land use policies during the course of this environmental review. A variety of additional regulations may apply to the project, and a more detailed review of the project's consistency with all applicable development standards will be performed as part of the development review processes by the Sonoma County Permit and Resource Management Department and the Regional Water Quality Control Board, and (possibly) by the California Department of Fish and Game and the United States Army Corps of Engineers. Impacts on plans and policies would be ***less than significant***.

c)	Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?	☐	☐	☐	**X**

Explanation: See Item IV.f, above.

X. MINERAL RESOURCES —Would the project:

a)	Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?	☐	☐	☐	**X**

[42] Sonoma County Code, Chapter 26 Sonoma County Zoning Regulations, Article 8, Section 26-08-010.

[43] Sonoma County Code, Chapter 26 Sonoma County Zoning Regulations, Article 52, Section 26-52-030.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
	☐	☐	☐	☐

Explanation: There are no mineral resources on the site as identified in the Resource Conservation Element of the Sonoma County General Plan[44] or the County's Aggregate Resource Management Plan prepared by the Permit and Resource Management Department.[45] The proposed project would not result in the loss of availability of known mineral resources. There would be ***no impact***.

b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally-important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use plan?	☐	☐	X	☐

Explanation: See Item X.a, above.

XI. NOISE — Would the project result in:

a) Exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?	☐	☐	X	☐

Explanation: The proposed trail would be restricted to non-motorized uses. The access facilities at Jacobs Ranch and Jack London State Historic Park would be open to conventional vehicles such as automobiles and pickup trucks hauling horse trailers. As discussed in Item XV.a and Table 3, below, up to 81 vehicle trips, distributed throughout the day, would be generated on a peak weekend day. The number of vehicle trips generated by the project would be small relative to current traffic levels in the project vicinity. An approximate doubling of traffic levels is required to produce an increase in noise that would be perceptible to the average person. Project-generated traffic would be well below this level; therefore, no significant project-generated noise is anticipated, and project operation noise impacts would be ***less than significant***.

Construction noise is discussed in Item XI.d, below.

b) Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	☐	☐	X	☐

[44] County of Sonoma, *Sonoma County General Plan,* Adopted: March 23, 1989, First Revision to Reflect Amendments and Corrections as of April 9, 1991, Second Revision to Reflect Amendments and Corrections as of March 1, 1994, Third Revision to Reflect Amendments and Corrections as of December 31, 1998, Figures RC-2h and RC-2i, viewed on http://www.sonoma-county.org/prmd/docs/gp/index.htm, 16 November 2006.

[45] David Schiltgen, Comprehensive Planning Division, Sonoma County Permit and Resource Management Department, email to Michael Kent of Michael Kent & Associates, 23 July 2007.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
	☐	☐	☐	☐

Explanation: After construction, the project would not expose persons or generate any sources of significant vibration (i.e., railroad operations). During construction, use of mechanized construction equipment could generate groundborne vibration and/or noise that may be perceptible to nearby residents and visitors; however, this groundborne vibration and/or noise would be temporary in nature and is not anticipated to rise to a level that could affect nearby structures or constitute a significant impact. The impact of groundborne vibration and noise on nearby residents and visitors would be ***less than significant.***

c) A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	☐	☐	**X**	☐

Explanation: See Item XI.a, above.

d) A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	☐	**X**	☐	☐

Explanation: Trail and access facility construction would involve a variety of mechanized construction equipment. Use of this power equipment would generate noise at the site during the construction period. While the project site is located in a relatively remote area with few sensitive noise receptors, and the public would be excluded from the project site during construction, there are two currently unoccupied residences on the Jacobs Ranch property, as well as an existing residence approximately 100 feet from the driveway crossing of the South Fork Matanzas Creek, and several other residences within 250 to 500 feet of the project driveway.

Sonoma County has no noise ordinance that regulates construction noise.

Exposure of occupants of residences in the project vicinity to construction noise is a ***potentially significant*** impact that would be reduced to a ***less than significant*** level by implementation of the following mitigation measure:

> ***Mitigation Measure XI-1:*** *The project sponsor shall ensure that:*
>
> *Noise levels produced by construction activities shall not exceed 80-dBA level at any one moment. Construction activities shall be limited to the hours of 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM on Monday through Friday and 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM on Saturdays. Construction activities shall be prohibited on Sunday and any national holiday.*
>
> *"Quieter" models of equipment, (such as gas or electric equipment as opposed to diesel-powered equipment) shall be used where technology exists, or all construction equipment shall have sound-control devices no less effective than those provided on the original equipment. No equipment shall have unmuffled exhaust.*
>
> *Loud equipment shall not be staged within 200 feet of noise-sensitive receptors.*

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
	☐	☐	☐	☐

The applicant shall designate a "noise disturbance coordinator" who is responsible for responding to any local complaints about construction noise. The noise disturbance coordinator shall determine the source of noise complaints (e.g. starting too early, bad muffler, etc) and institute reasonable measures to correct the problem. A telephone number for the noise disturbance coordinator and approved construction hours shall be posted at the site on conspicuous signage. The noise disturbance coordinator shall contact and advise adjacent noise-sensitive receptors of the construction schedule.

The use of loud sound signals shall be avoided in favor of light warnings except those required by safety laws for the protection of personnel.

Following the commencement of construction and as directed by the County of Sonoma, the contractor(s) shall implement appropriate noise mitigation measures including, but not limited to, changing the location of stationary construction equipment, shutting off idling equipment, rescheduling construction activity, or notifying adjacent residents in advance of construction work.

e)	For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	☐	☐	☐	**X**

Explanation: The project is not located within an airport land use plan or within two miles of a public or public use airport. There would be ***no impact***.

f)	For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	☐	☐	☐	**X**

Explanation: The project is not within the vicinity of a private airstrip. There would be ***no impact***.

XII. POPULATION AND HOUSING — Would the project:

a)	Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?	☐	☐	**X**	☐

Explanation: The project would retain the existing main house and ranch house at Jacobs Ranch for possible rental, future public use if identified, and/or occupancy by a caretaker, but

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
	☐	☐	☐	☐

would not involve construction of any new housing, businesses, or infrastructure that could induce substantial population growth in the area. The project would have a ***less than significant*** impact on growth inducement.

b) Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	☐	☐	**X**	☐

Explanation: The existing main house and ranch house at Jacobs Ranch, both of which are currently unoccupied, would be retained for possible rental, future public use if identified, and/or occupancy by a caretaker. If these two dwellings are rented for residential use or occupied by a caretaker, there would be no effect on the existing housing stock. If either or both are put to a non-residential public use, there could be a loss of up to two dwelling units. This loss would be small relative to both the existing housing stock and the current residential vacancy rate, and thus, the impact on existing housing would be ***less than significant***.

c) Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	☐	☐	☐	**X**

Explanation: The main house and ranch house at Jacobs Ranch are currently unoccupied, and no people would be displaced by the project. The project would have ***no impact***.

XIII. PUBLIC SERVICES: Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives for any of the following public services:

a) Fire protection?	☐	**X**	☐	☐

Explanation: Construction and use of the proposed trail and access facilities would involve activities that could increase the risk of fire at the site, which would be a ***potentially significant*** impact. As discussed in Item VII.h, above, the proposed construction Fire Safety Plan (see 9. Description of Project, Construction Methods, Fire Safety and Erosion Control, above), proposed operational procedures, and implementation of Mitigation Measure VII-2 would reduce the risk of fire to a ***less than significant*** level, and no new or physically altered fire protection facilities would be required to continue to provide acceptable fire protection service to the proposed project.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
b) Police protection?	☐	☐	X	☐

Explanation: Activities at the proposed trail are not anticipated to substantially increase the demand for police protection at the site, or to require new or altered police service facilities. This would be a ***less than significant*** impact.

c) Schools?	☐	☐	☐	X

Explanation: The project would not generate any students or substantial demands on school facilities. The project would have ***no impact***.

d) Parks?	☐	☐	X	☐

Explanation: The proposed trail would be entered via new access facilities at Jacobs Ranch and existing facilities at Jack London State Historic Park (JLSHP). The proposed trail and access facilities are expected to increase the number of visitors to a maximum of 50 vehicle trip ends (25 vehicles visiting the facility) on a peak weekday and 81 vehicle trip ends (approximately 42 vehicles visiting the facility) on a peak weekend (see Item XV, below). At an average occupancy of two people per vehicle, this would represent 50 to 81 visitors per day. This anticipated number of new users would be small relative to the existing usage of JLSHP, and would not exceed the capacity of the new access facilities at Jacobs Ranch. No new park facilities beyond those proposed as part of the project would be required, and this would be a ***less than significant*** impact.

e) Other public facilities?	☐	☐	X	☐

Explanation: Neither the construction nor the operation of the proposed project would significantly affect government services other than those discussed in Items XIII.a, XIII.b, and XIII.d, above.

XIV. RECREATION —

a) Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?	☐	☐	X	☐

Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
☐	☐	☐	☐

Explanation: As discussed in Item XIII.d, above, the proposed trail and access facilities would generate new visitors to the project site and Jack London State Historic Park (JLSHP), but this additional usage would be relatively small, and would not lead to substantial physical deterioration of the public recreation facilities at JLSHP or elsewhere. This would be a ***less than significant*** impact.

b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	☐	X	☐	☐

Explanation: The project consists of the construction of a recreational trail and access facilities. The potential environmental effects of the trail and access facilities, and mitigation measures required to reduce impacts to a less than significant level, where required, are discussed in Items I through XVI of this Environmental Checklist. All impacts would be ***less than significant***, or would be reduced to a ***less than significant*** level by the mitigation measures identified in this Environmental Checklist.

XV. TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC

The evaluation presented in this section is based on a traffic analysis prepared by an independent transportation consultant.[46]

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Road Network and Intersections

Sonoma Mountain Road, which provides access to the project site, is a winding rural roadway that extends approximately 7.6 miles between Bennett Valley Road southeast of Santa Rosa and around Sonoma Mountain to Warm Springs Road northwest of the town of Glen Ellen. Sonoma Mountain Road is designated as a Minor Collector and a Scenic Corridor in the Sonoma County General Plan. The lower elevations of the corridor are also designated as a Scenic Landscape Unit.

[46] W-Trans (Whitlock & Weinberger Transportation, Inc.), North Slope Sonoma Mountain Ridge Trail Traffic Analysis for the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District, November 2, 2006.

Sonoma Mountain Road provides access to rural residences, ranches, and agricultural activities on Sonoma Mountain's northern slopes. The road traverses mountainous terrain and ranges in elevation from approximately 538 feet at its intersection with Bennett Valley Road to approximately 875 feet at the driveway entrance to the Jacobs Ranch, rises to approximately 1,200 feet at the road's apex around the northern shoulder of Sonoma Mountain, and falls to approximately 280 feet at its intersection with Warm Springs Road on the east side of the mountain. The majority of Sonoma Mountain Road has two lanes and ranges in width from approximately 18 to 22 feet; however, in the vicinity of Cooper's Grove, east of the project site, Sonoma Mountain Road narrows to one lane where several wide unpaved shoulder areas serve as pull outs to allow passing of on-coming vehicles. This stretch of road is marked with warning signs on each end that show an advisory speed limit of 10 miles per hour. Centerline striping is provided on Sonoma Mountain Road near intersections. Otherwise the road generally lacks striping, signing, and shoulders, and no curb, gutter, or sidewalks are provided.

Sonoma Mountain Road is currently closed west of Enterprise Road, approximately three miles east of the Jacobs Ranch, due to a major geologic slump. The closure resulted from storm damage sustained in December 2005. Sonoma County Public Works estimates repairs will be completed and the roadway reopened in September 2007.

Pressley Road is a two-lane local road that is designated as a Scenic Corridor in the Sonoma County General Plan. Pressley Road extends approximately 2.8 miles between Roberts Road, which is just east of Rohnert Park, to its terminus at Sonoma Mountain Road, approximately 0.8 miles down slope from the Jacobs Ranch. Pressley Road is a rural roadway with varied topography and multiple curves as it climbs Sonoma Mountain from the Santa Rosa Plain. Pressley Road has two 12-foot travel lanes, a centerline stripe, and is flanked by drainage ditches. Little or no shoulders are provided on Pressley Road. Crane Creek Regional Park, a 128-acre Sonoma County Regional Park, is located at 5000 Pressley Road.

Bennett Valley Road is identified as a Rural Major Collector in the Sonoma County General Plan. Bennett Valley Road extends approximately 10.7 miles between Santa Rosa and Warm Springs Road in Glen Ellen. Bennett Valley Road has two 12-foot travel lanes with variable width shoulders. The posted speed limit varies along Bennett Valley Road, ranging from 35 to 55 miles per hour.

Warm Springs Road is identified as a Rural Major Collector in the Sonoma County General Plan. Warm Springs Road is a two-lane road that extends approximately 5.3 miles between SR 12 in Kenwood and Arnold Drive in Glen Ellen. Warm Springs Road has two 10- to 12-foot travel lanes with variable width shoulders.

Bennett Valley Road, Sonoma Mountain Road and Pressley Road are all proposed Class III (signed) bike routes in the Sonoma County Transportation Agency Bicycle Plan.[47]

Sonoma Mountain Road/Bennett Valley Road is a "tee" intersection with a stop sign controlling movements from Sonoma Mountain Road onto Bennett Valley Road. Sonoma Mountain Road intersects Bennett Valley Road at a broad sweeping turn. The posted speed limit on Bennett Valley Road in the vicinity of the intersection is 45 mph, though observations indicate that actual speeds exceed the posted limit.

[47] Sonoma County Transportation Agency, *SCTA Bicycle Plan*, April 20, 2006, revised February 8, 2007, on http://www.sctainfo.org/Bike_Main_files/pdf/sonoma_county.pdf, viewed 16 July 2007.

Sonoma Mountain Road/Pressley Road is a "tee" intersection with a stop sign on Pressley Road at Sonoma Mountain Road. A double yellow centerline stripe is provided on Sonoma Mountain Road for approximately 200 feet both up and downhill of the intersection.

Sonoma Mountain Road/Warm Springs Road is a "tee" intersection, with the Sonoma Mountain Road approach to Warm Springs Road stop-controlled.

Public Transit and Bicycle Facilities

There are no transit routes, transit facilities, or bicycle facilities in the project vicinity.

Jacobs Ranch Driveway Access

The Jacobs Ranch driveway is located amongst a group of private driveways at approximately 875 feet elevation on an uphill grade along a relatively straight section of Sonoma Mountain Road. The Jacobs Ranch driveway intersects Sonoma Mountain Road at a shared driveway apron, where the Jacobs Ranch driveway and a parallel neighboring driveway meet. The shared configuration results in a wide driveway apron with large turn radii, which permits easier entry and exit by turning vehicles. Jacobs Ranch is accessed by an Asphalt Concrete (AC) paved single-lane driveway, which is approximately 12 feet wide and is shared with a neighboring residence. The AC pavement extends approximately 1,000 feet to where the driveway forks to the neighboring residence (5295 Sonoma Mountain Road). A dirt/gravel drive then continues from the end of the pavement uphill to the Ranch's existing infrastructure and proposed staging area.

Sight Distance

Sight distance from the Jacobs Ranch driveway along Sonoma Mountain Road was evaluated based on stopping sight distance criteria contained in the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) *Highway Design Manual*, 5th Edition. The *Highway Design Manual* indicates that public street corner sight distance requirements are not applicable for driveways. Since the proposed access is a driveway, and no other standards exist, it has been treated as a private driveway, with the minimum sight distance requirement based on stopping sight distance. Sonoma Mountain Road is marked with warning signs that show an advisory speed of 20 mph near the entrance into the Jacobs Ranch. Actual speeds, which are limited by roadway conditions, were observed to be approximately 30 to 35 mph. For speeds of 35 mph, a private driveway intersection with a public road should have stopping sight distance of at least 250 feet. Sight distance to the east, or uphill from the project site, is approximately 300 feet, which is adequate for an approach speed of 40 mph. Sight distance to the west, or downhill, is clear in excess of 700 feet, which is adequate for speeds in excess of 55 mph.

Traffic Counts

The most recent traffic counts available for Sonoma Mountain Road are published in the *County of Sonoma Traffic Volumes*, January 1995 through December 2001. The document includes counts from 1996 for Sonoma Mountain Road, which were taken immediately east of Pressley Road. The document identifies an Average Daily Traffic Count (ADT) of 633 vehicles. Two scenarios were used to evaluate traffic levels on Sonoma Mountain Road. First, the 1996 data were used since growth on Sonoma Mountain has not kept pace with development experienced in suburban Sonoma County, and second, a three percent annual growth factor was applied, which is a conservatively high estimate based upon growth experienced in the County's

incorporated communities. The County's incorporated communities have seen annual traffic growth in the range of 2 to 2.5 percent in recent years. Utilizing a three percent annual growth factor, the 2006 ADT for Sonoma Mountain Road would be 822.

LEVEL OF SERVICE AND PROJECT TRIP GENERATION

Level of Service (LOS)

Intersection and roadway traffic operations are graded using the Level of Service (LOS) grading system. The LOS grading system is a qualitative measurement of traffic flows, with a scale ranging from LOS A to F. LOS A represents free-flow conditions and LOS F represents congested or jammed conditions. For rural roads (such as Sonoma Mountain Road), the County of Sonoma considers LOS C the lowest acceptable Level of Service. LOS C on rural roads corresponds to 5,000 vehicles per day.

Project Trip Generation and Visitor Volumes

For the purpose of estimating the number of new vehicle trips that a proposed project can be expected to generate, *Trip Generation,* 7th Edition, Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE), 2003, is typically used. This standard reference is used by jurisdictions throughout the country, and is based on actual trip generation studies performed at numerous locations in areas of various populations. However, the trip generation characteristics of parks and recreational facilities are highly variable. Trip generation rates for parks are largely dependent on specific characteristics of the region and the type of park facility; and thus do not easily fall into national standard categories such as trips per acre.

For example, the closest land use rate designations contained in *Trip Generation* are "County Park" and "Regional Park" (ITE Land Uses #412 and #417). Given that these land use rates are calculated for developed parks with recreational facilities such as picnic areas, children's play structures, boat ramps, swimming facilities, and concessionaires, they have been developed for attractions and uses that are substantially different than those proposed for the North Slope Sonoma Mountain Ridge Trail project. The proposed project calls for a small staging facility to serve a rugged long distance trail that contains steep ascents and descents, minimal user amenities, and is located in a rural and undeveloped area. Thus, these ITE rates would seriously misrepresent the limited improvements of the proposed project.

To gain a better understanding of the anticipated traffic impacts that would be associated with the proposed project, two methods were employed. First a search for comparable projects was performed, and second a parking multiplier was applied. Each of these methodologies is described below.

Comparable Projects. Given the variable nature of parks and recreation facilities, an optimal method for understanding their potential to generate new traffic is to study comparable facilities within the same region. Thus, research was performed to identify comparable projects in Sonoma County and the greater Bay Area. Interviews were conducted with the Sonoma County Regional Parks Department, Marin County Parks and Open Space District, Mid Peninsula Regional Open Space District, East Bay Regional Parks, and the Bay Area Ridge Trail. Unfortunately, the unique nature of the proposed project has made finding a suitable comparison difficult. The survey of the above agencies yielded a few general findings. First, parking and visitor information is not readily available and some agencies do not have the

means to maintain this information, especially for smaller facilities and trail staging areas. Second, at least one of the agencies provides no parking or staging facilities for its hiking trails. Instead, visitors park informally along the roadway as close to the trailhead as possible.

Two existing parks that contain some similarities to the proposed project were identified and selected as comparable sites (comps). Comp I, the Morgan Territory Regional Preserve, is part of the East Bay Regional Park System and most closely resembles the proposed project; it is remotely located and provides only low impact uses and minimal user amenities. Comp 2, Shiloh Ranch Regional Park, is a part of the Sonoma County Regional Parks system. Similar to the proposed project, it too is located in the foothills east of the Santa Rosa Plain; however, Shiloh Ranch is located in the vicinity of an urban center and includes a well-developed picnic area with paved access and barbeques. Finally, the park is available by reservation for group activities and special events. Expanded descriptions of these projects are provided below.

Comp I: Morgan Territory Regional Preserve. Morgan Territory Regional Preserve is a relatively isolated, low impact park located on the east side of Mount Diablo that provides trails for hiking and equestrian use. The park encompasses over 4,000 acres and has a staging area with 29 parking spaces for vehicles and horse trailers along with restrooms, drinking water, an emergency phone, horse trough, and an information kiosk. The Preserve's staging area is in a remote location, approximately ten miles from Interstate 580 in the City of Livermore. According to a 1997 traffic study[48], the park generates an average of 19 trip ends per weekday and 38 trip ends per weekend day. The definition of a trip end is either a trip origin or a trip destination, thus every complete trip will have two trip ends.

Morgan Territory Regional Preserve parking lot has a dirt and gravel surface. There are no marked spaces, but timber wheel stops line the perimeter of the parking area. The parking lot is open from 8:00 a.m. to dusk. Similar to the potential caretaker occupancy in the main house of Jacobs Ranch, a caretaker/manager lives on site at the Preserve in a home adjacent to the parking area. The caretaker oversees the daily operation of the staging area.

Comp 2: Shiloh Ranch Regional Park. Shiloh Ranch Regional Park, located in the Sonoma County foothills east of Windsor, covers approximately 860 acres of hilly terrain that ranges in elevation from 200 to 850 feet above sea level. The park includes a developed picnic area with full user amenities including barbecues, a gazebo, a lawn area, trashcans, and flush restrooms, all located near the park entrance. The remainder of the park is natural woodland, which covers a diverse landscape from rugged canyons to scenic rolling vistas with over three miles of trails for hiking, bicycling, and horseback riding. Shiloh Ranch Park contains a large parking area with 40 paved passenger vehicle spaces and a gravel lot with 20 truck and trailer spaces. At 860 acres, Shiloh Ranch Park accommodates hikers, mountain bicyclists, and equestrians.

While Shiloh Ranch Regional Park contains some similarities to the proposed project, visitor use and trip generation rates for the Shiloh Ranch Park facility would be considerably higher than the proposed project for several reasons including its location immediately adjacent to urban development, inclusion of developed public amenities, availability for group reservations, and accessibility by major roadways, as well as by foot or by bicycle.

Visitor data at Shiloh Ranch Regional Park provided by the Sonoma County Regional Parks Department for a previous study was consulted for this analysis. According to this data, the peak month for visitor volumes at Shiloh Ranch Park in 2003 occurred during the month of May.

[48] Fehr & Peers Associates, Background Traffic Report: East Bay Regional Park District, 1997.

During this month, there was an average of 53 vehicles arriving at the Park on a peak weekday and 79 vehicles arrived during a peak weekend day. This corresponds to an average of 106 weekday vehicle daily trip ends and 158 weekend daily trip ends.

Parking Multiplier. Another method for estimating trip generation, which is well suited to this type of project, is to develop a parking multiplier. A parking multiplier estimates trip generation rates for a particular use by multiplying the average number of vehicles per parking space per day by two trips (one inbound and one outbound). Therefore the number of parking spaces proposed at a park facility can suggest the potential trip generation of the project.

The purpose of the *Background Traffic Report: East Bay Regional Park District* cited above was to evaluate the traffic impacts of future park facilities within the District. The study included a parking analysis of five representative park types, for use as an analytical framework for the analysis of future park facilities (see Table 2). The collected data were used to develop parking multipliers for each of the five representative park types which were distinguished by the recreational uses offered at each facility. The park types include: shoreline oriented, interpretive center, specific attraction, staging area, and multiple active uses. Morgan Territory Regional Preserve, a remotely located passive use park, was analyzed as a staging area. The Morgan Territory Regional Preserve was selected as the closest comparable project to the proposed project due to the remote location of the project, the provision of similar uses at each facility, the presence of a caretaker on site, and the similar size of the project parking facilities and staging areas.

Table 2
Representative Facility Parking Surveys

Park	Representative Types of Uses Offered	Survey Findings					
		Avg. No. of Vehicles Per Space Per Day (Parking Multiplier	Avg. Total Time Each Space Occupied (Minutes)	Avg. duration of Parked Vehicle (hr:min)	Daily Peak Occupancy of Lot (No. of Vehicles)	Daily Peak Occupancy of Lot (Time of Day)	Percent of Lot Utilized During Peak Occupancy
Point Pinole Regional Shoreline	Shoreline Oriented	1.37	172	1:23	43	7:00 PM	41
Crown Memorial State Beach	Interpretive Center	2.73	431	2:51	37	2:30 PM	100
Ardenwood Historic Farm Regional Preserve	Specific Attraction	0.82	152	2:18	95	1:00 PM	73
Morgan Territory Regional Preserve	Staging Area	0.66	119	1.19	16	2:30 PM	20
Shadow Cliffs Regional Recreation Area	Multiple	1.61	405	4:06	419	3:30 PM	80

NOTES:

1. Parks surveyed are representative of typical types of parks managed by the East Bay Regional Park District. This information can be used to estimate parking demand and traffic generation at planned parks of similar nature.
2. Parking surveys conducted on two consecutive Sundays (June 23 and 30, 1996) reflecting typical summer weekend days, but not peak summer holidays such as Independence Day or Labor Day.
3. Surveys were conducted from park opening until closing with data circuits conducted every 90 minutes.

Source: Fehr & Peers Associates, Inc., June 1996

Trip Generation Estimates. Due to the unique nature of the proposed project, each of the methodologies described above was employed in order to develop trip generation estimates for the project. Given the varied nature of each methodology, each analysis yielded different results.

Utilizing the 0.66 parking multiplier developed for the Morgan Territory Regional Preserve, along with the maximum 22 potential vehicle spaces proposed for the Jacobs Ranch, an average of 30 vehicle trip ends per day was calculated.

Using a conservative approach, an analysis was performed which utilized visitor counts collected by park rangers at Shiloh Ranch Regional Park scaled by the ratio of acreage of each park. The estimated number of vehicle trip ends was then generated on an hourly basis over the course of an average and peak weekday and weekend day based on typical hourly usage rates of activity centers, as shown in Table 3. It is likely that the trail and access facilities would have a usage distribution similar to a general retail facility, with peak usage occurring in the middle of the day. An average occupancy of two people per vehicle was assumed. The analysis identified a combined in- and out-bound trip average of four peak hour trips on an average weekday and five peak hour trips on a peak weekday; with six midday peak hour trips on an average weekend and eight midday peak hour trips on a peak weekend. The analysis identified a total of 42 trips on an average weekday and 60 trips on an average weekend, and 50 trips on a peak weekday and 81 trips on a peak weekend.

Table 3: Trip Generation

Land Use	PM Peak Hour Trips (Weekday)		PM Peak Hour Trips (Weekend)		Total Daily Vehicle Trip Ends	
	In	Out	In	Out	Weekday	Weekend
Regional Park - *Peak Day*	3	2	4	4	50	81
Regional Park - *Average Day*	2	2	3	3	42	60

— Would the project:

a)	Cause an increase in traffic which is substantial in relation to the existing traffic load and capacity of the street system (i.e., result in a substantial increase	☐	☐	☒	☐

in either the number of vehicle trips, the volume-to-capacity ratio on roads, or congestion at intersections?

Explanation:

Existing Plus Project Conditions

Using conservative estimates, the addition of the estimated peak volume of daily park trips (81) to the 2006 ADT of 822, Sonoma Mountain Road would have an ADT of 903 vehicles, which is well within the County's LOS C Standard for rural roads of 5,000 vehicles per day. With project-generated traffic the Jacobs Ranch driveway intersection with Sonoma Mountain Road is anticipated to operate with acceptable levels of delay.

With the improvements to the Jacobs Ranch driveway that are proposed as part of the project (striping at the driveway entrance, paving the driveway apron and the steep straight section, creating a one-way loop, adding turnouts, and trimming the trees to the west; see 9. Description of Project, Access Driveway to Staging Area, above), the driveway is expected to operate acceptably for visitor traffic.

The project would have a ***less than significant*** impact on area traffic operation.

As discussed in Item XV.d, below, while sight distance from the Jacobs Ranch driveway to the east is acceptable by Caltrans standards, sight distance in this direction could be increased if the trees to the east of the existing driveway on the south side of the road were trimmed.

Cumulative Conditions

The Cumulative scenario evaluates future traffic conditions associated with the ultimate buildout of the County of Sonoma. Under Cumulative Conditions, traffic is anticipated to increase, and levels of service at some intersections and/or roads may deteriorate to unacceptable levels, including, potentially, intersections or roads in the project vicinity. As discussed in Existing Plus Project Conditions, above, the project would contribute a small number of additional vehicles to Sonoma Mountain Road, which would have a less than significant impact. There are no large proposed or recently-approved projects in the project vicinity which could, in combination with the proposed project, generate substantial cumulative traffic impacts. With the project, traffic levels at local intersections and on local roads, including those that would operate at unacceptable levels of service, would not be substantially different than conditions without the project. Any intersections or roads that would deteriorate to unacceptable levels under Cumulative Conditions would do so with or without the project. For these reasons, the project's contributions would be less than cumulatively considerable, and the project's impact on cumulative traffic would be ***less than significant.***

b) Exceed, either individually or cumulatively, a level of service standard established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?	☐	☐	X	☐

Explanation: See discussion under Item XV.a, above.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
c) Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks?	☐	☐	☐	X

Explanation: The proposed project would not affect air traffic patterns. There would be ***no impact.***

d) Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	☐	☐	X	☐

Explanation: The collision history for Sonoma Mountain Road was reviewed to determine any trends or patterns that may indicate safety issues. While collision rates for a traffic study would typically be limited to the segment of roadway in the immediate vicinity of the project, the collision history for the entire length of Sonoma Mountain Road was evaluated since there is the potential for the public to access the Jacobs Ranch property from either side of the Mountain. Collision rates were calculated based on records for the calendar years 2000 through 2004, which is the most recent full year for which records are currently available from the California Highway Patrol as published in their Statewide Integrated Traffic Records System (SWITRS) reports. There were 14 collisions reported on Sonoma Mountain Road during the 5-year period reviewed. Five of the 14 collisions involved vehicles turning left from Sonoma Mountain Road onto northbound Bennett Valley Road. Five more collisions were single vehicle incidents (vehicles running off the road), which were distributed at various points along the roadway. The remaining four incidents were varied in nature and included a head on collision that resulted in a fatality, which was attributed to driving under the influence, a sideswipe, a bicycle collision, and a collision with a fixed object that was likely another 'ran off road' incident. The calculated collision rate for Sonoma Mountain Road over the 5-year period reviewed based on the extrapolated 822 ADT was 1.23 collisions per million vehicle miles (c/mvm). The calculated collision rate for Sonoma Mountain Road over the 5-year period reviewed based on the 1996 ADT of 633 was 1.59 collisions per million vehicle miles. The average collision rate for similar facilities statewide, as indicated in *2002 Accident Data on California State Highways*, California Department of Transportation, is 1.65 c/mvm. Therefore, under either scenario Sonoma Mountain Road has a collision rate that is lower than the statewide average for similar roadway segments.

With the proposed improvements to the Jacobs Ranch driveway that are proposed as part of the project (striping at the driveway entrance, paving the driveway apron and the steep straight section, creating a one-way loop, adding turnouts, and trimming the trees to the west; see 9. Description of Project, Access Driveway to Staging Area, above), the driveway is expected to operate acceptably for both visitor traffic and emergency access. The impact of the proposed project on transportation safety would be ***less than significant***.

Sight distance from the Jacobs Ranch driveway to the east (currently 300 feet) is acceptable by Caltrans standards, and does not constitute a safety hazard. However, if existing trees were

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
	☐	☐	☐	☐

trimmed, available sight distance would extend to the curve in the road east of the project site, a distance of approximately 350 feet. Although not required to mitigate project impacts on safety, this tree trimming would improve sight distance to the east. The District may wish to consider implementing this improvement measure as part of the project.

> ***Improvement Measure XV-1:*** *Trim the second, third, and fourth trees to the east of the existing driveway on the south side of the road.*

e) Result in inadequate emergency access?	☐	☐	**X**	☐

Explanation: As discussed in Items XV.a and XV.d above, the proposed project would not substantially affect local intersection operations, roadway operations, or transportation safety, and, with improvements that are proposed as part of the project, the driveway is expected to operate acceptably for emergency access. Therefore, the impact on emergency access would be ***less than significant.***

f) Result in inadequate parking capacity?	☐	☐	**X**	☐

Explanation: As discussed in item XV.a, Project Trip Generation and Visitor Volumes and Table 3, above, the proposed project would generate up to 50 trips on a peak weekday and 81 trips on a peak weekend. Parking demand by these trail users would correspond to approximately 25 vehicles on a peak weekday and 41 vehicles on a peak weekend. Because these vehicles, and their parking demand, would be distributed throughout the day, the demand for parking spaces at a given time could be accommodated by the ten conventional and six pull-though spaces in the proposed parking area. Parking impacts would be ***less than significant***.

g) Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs supporting alternative transportation (e.g., bus turnouts, bicycle racks)?	☐	☐	**X**	☐

Explanation: There are no bus routes and stops along Sonoma Mountain Road in the project vicinity. The project would not conflict with any policies, plans, or programs supporting alternative transportation, and the project would have a ***less than significant*** impact.

XVI. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS —

Would the project:

a) Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?	☐	☐	**X**	☐

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
	☐	☐	☐	☐

Explanation: Construction and use of the proposed trail and access facilities, including one or two new pump-out vault restrooms at the staging area, and potential continued occupation of the existing ranch house and main house at Jacobs Ranch would generate wastewater typical of domestic uses, which would not exceed applicable wastewater treatment requirements. This would be a ***less than significant*** impact.

b) Require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	☐	☐	**X**	☐

Explanation: Occupation of the ranch house and main house, and use of the access facilities and trail, would generate a negligible demand for additional water. The existing corral access road that would be restored to grassland would not require long-term irrigation. No new or expanded water treatment facilities would be required.

The volume of sewage generated by one or two new restrooms at the access facilities, and occupation of the main house and ranch house, would be negligible in relation to current wastewater volumes, and no new or expanded wastewater treatment facilities would be required.

The proposed project would have a ***less than significant*** impact on demand for water or wastewater treatment.

c) Require or result in the construction of new stormwater drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	☐	☐	**X**	☐

Explanation: As discussed in Items VIII.c and VIII.d, above, the proposed project would not substantially alter the drainage pattern in the project area, and therefore would not require new or expanded drainage facilities. The project would have a ***less than significant*** impact.

d) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?	☐	☐	**X**	☐

Explanation: See Item XVI.b, above.

e) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the	☐	☐	**X**	☐

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
	☐	☐	☐	☐

project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?

Explanation: See Items XVI.a and XVI.b, above.

f) Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs?	☐	☐	X	☐

Explanation: The proposed project would generate a negligible quantity of solid waste, and the impact on landfill capacity would be ***less than significant***.

g) Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	☐	☐	X	☐

Explanation: The proposed project would comply with all laws and regulations pertaining to solid waste. This would be a ***less than significant*** impact.

XVII. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE —

a) Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	☐	X	☐	☐

Explanation: As discussed in Items I, III, IV, V, VI, VII, VIII, XI, XIII, and XIV, construction and/or operation of the proposed project could have adverse effects in the areas of aesthetics, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, noise, public services, and recreation. Mitigation Measures identified in Items I, III, IV, V, VI, VII, VIII, XI, XIII, and XIV would reduce all these potential impacts to less-than-significant levels.

b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past	☐	☐	X	☐

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
	☐	☐	☐	☐

projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.)

Explanation: Neither construction nor operation of the proposed project would have cumulatively considerable impacts.

c)	Does the project have environmental effects that will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	☐	X	☐	☐

Explanation: Potential impacts on people are identified in this document in the discussions on aesthetics, air quality, geology and soils, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, noise, public services, and recreation (Items I, III, VI, VII, VIII, XI, XIII, and XIV, respectively). Implementation Measures contained in this Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration would reduce all these potential impacts to less-than-significant levels.

REPORT PREPARATION

This Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration was prepared by Michael Kent & Associates, with evaluation of biological resources by TOVA Applied Science & Technology, evaluation of cultural resources by Holman & Associates, evaluation of transportation impacts by Whitlock and Weinberger Transportation, Inc., and graphics by LandPeople, Landscape Architects and Planners, and the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District.

SUMMARY OF MITIGATION AND IMPROVEMENT MEASURES

The following mitigation and improvement measures have been identified in this IS/MND. Mitigation Measures, listed first, would reduce potentially significant impacts to less-than-significant levels. Improvement Measures, listed after the Mitigation Measures, are not required to mitigate potentially significant impacts identified in this IS/MND, but would improve or enhance the proposed project. The District may wish to consider implementing these improvement measures as part of the project.

Aesthetics:

Mitigation Measure I-1: *Implement Mitigation Measures IV-4 and IV-5.*

Air Quality:

Mitigation Measure III-1: *The project applicant shall reduce the severity of project construction–period dust impacts by requiring implementation of the following dust control measures by contractors during construction:*

a) *Watering should be used to control dust generation during excavation, grading, and site preparation activities.*

b) *Cover all trucks hauling debris, soils, sand or other such material from the site or require all trucks to maintain at least two feet of freeboard.*

c) *Use dust–proof chutes to load debris into trucks whenever feasible.*

d) *Water all active construction areas at least twice daily.*

e) *Water or cover all stockpiles of debris, soil, sand, or other materials that can be blown by the wind.*

f) *Apply water three times daily, or apply (non–toxic) soil stabilizers, on all unpaved access roads, parking areas, and staging areas at construction sites.*

g) *Sweep daily (preferably with water sweepers) all paved access roads, parking areas, and staging areas at construction sites.*

h) *Sweep streets daily (preferably with water sweepers) if visible soil material is carried onto adjacent public streets.*

i) *Require the project contractor(s) to maintain and operate construction equipment so as to minimize exhaust emissions of particulates and other pollutants, by such means as prohibiting idling motors when equipment is not in use or when trucks are waiting in queues, and implementing specific maintenance programs to reduce emissions for equipment that would be in frequent use for much of the construction period.*

j) *All vehicles and equipment shall adhere to a 15 mph speed limit on Jacobs Ranch.*

Biological Resources:

Mitigation Measure IV-1:
For scheduled construction between February 1 and August 1, a qualified biologist shall conduct a pre-construction survey to determine if nesting is occurring in trees along the alignment of the trail section to be constructed. The survey shall occur within 14 days prior to the initiation of trail construction activities during the early part of the breeding season (February through April) and no more than 30 days prior to the initiation of these activities during the later part of the breeding season (May through August). An active nest would be indicated by one or more of the following:

a) Incubation behavior of adults (e.g., regular periods of "disappearance" into the same location followed by short, secretive flights to forage)

b) Extreme distress and alarm calls when in close vicinity of the nest tree

c) Observation of food being carried on the beak or claws to the nest

If the nests or nesting behavior are observed, the proposed trail alignment shall be located at least 100 feet from the nest tree and the following measures shall be implemented to protect the nest site:

c) Establishment of a buffer using flagging or staking around the tree in accordance with CDFG recommendations until the young have fledged. The nest tree shall be

monitored a minimum of once per week to confirm that the young have fledged and that no new nesting pairs are present before the buffer is removed.

d) If it is not feasible to delay or modify construction activities around the tree, the CDFG shall be contacted to discuss alternative buffer options.

If construction is planned between August 1 and February 1 trail construction could proceed as scheduled.

***Mitigation Measure IV-2**:*

Prior to creek crossing construction, the project applicant shall contact the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the California Department of Fish and Game to determine if this activity requires either a "Permit for Discharges of Dredged/Fill Material into Waters of the U.S." from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) pursuant to Clean Water Act, Section 404, or a "Streambed Alteration Agreement" from the California Department of Fish and Game (Department) pursuant to Section 1601-1603 of the State Fish and Game Code. The approval or permit conditions from either or both of these agencies shall be incorporated into the project plans.

At a minimum, the following conditions are typically incorporated into such plans:

- *Work within the creek corridor shall be confined to the period April 15 to October 15. Revegetation work would not necessarily be confined to this period.*

- *No heavy equipment shall operate in the creek where there is water.*

- *Any equipment or vehicles crossing the creek, or operating adjacent to the creek channel or wetlands, shall be cleaned of all external oil, grease, and materials that, if introduced to water, could be deleterious top aquatic life, wildlife or riparian habitat.*

- *Any equipment or vehicles crossing drainages, permitted for traffic crossings, or operating adjacent to the creek channel or wetlands, shall be checked and maintained daily to prevent leaks of material that, if introduced to water, could be deleterious to aquatic life, wildlife or riparian habitat.*

- *The trail construction contractor shall take whatever precautions are necessary to minimize the discharge of fine sediment from the work site to the waters of the US or State, including the use of silt and debris fencing to catch sediment, spreading overburden, and seeding with native grass and other seeds.*

- *Adequate erosion and siltation control measures shall be used to prevent turbid or silt-laden water from entering the tributary creek or drainage ways to the creek. All erosion controls shall be in place prior to commencement of work and shall be maintained for the duration of project construction.*

- *The limits of the work site and all environmentally sensitive areas shall be marked to prevent equipment and worker access.*

- *Bridge building materials and/or construction equipment shall not be stockpiled or stored where they could be washed into the water or where they will cover aquatic or riparian vegetation.*

- *Debris, soil, silt, bark, rubbish, creosote-treated wood, raw cement/concrete or washings thereof, asphalt, paint or other coating material, oil or other petroleum products, or any other substances which could be hazardous to aquatic life, resulting from project related activities, shall be prevented from contaminating the soil and/or entering the waters of the state. Any of these materials, placed within or where they may enter the creek, by Operator or any party working under contract, or with the permission of the Operator, shall be removed immediately.*

- *During construction, the contractor shall not dump any litter or construction debris within the riparian creek zone. All such debris and waste shall be picked up daily and properly disposed of at an appropriate site.*

- *If, in the opinion of the Corps or Department, conditions arise, or change, in such a manner as to be considered deleterious to the stream or wildlife, operations shall cease until corrective measures approved by the Corps or Department are taken.*

The above conditions would be finalized by the US Army Corps of Engineers or Department of Fish and Game subsequent to the approval of permit or agreement applications.

Mitigation Measure IV-3: *The new trail alignment shall, to the maximum extent possible, utilize existing disturbed areas, clearings, and roads for trails, and the trail contractor shall adhere to the District's wildlife-friendly fencing standard and install, as required for property-line fencing, fencing designed to allow the movement of terrestrial wildlife. The lower portion of fences shall have a mesh size that allows smaller mammals such as black tailed hare, skunk, and opossum to easily pass through but resists feral pig movement from any property into the trail corridor.*

Mitigation Measure IV-4:

For the removal of any tree protected by the Sonoma County Tree Protection Ordinance that is larger than 9 inches DBH, compensatory tree replacement shall occur at a 2:1 ratio (tree removed: tree replaced).

- *Establish a reforestation site along the western border of forest in Jacobs Ranch. 100 fifteen-gallon trees shall be planted at this site to mitigate for the 46 trees that would be removed.*

- *Species selected for reforestation shall be resistant to Sudden Oak Death (SOD), caused by the pathogen* Phytophthora ramorum. *To the extent possible, the species of replacement trees shall correspond to the trees removed.*

- *Replacement trees shall be planted between November and January with nursery stock from local sources familiar with the soil types of Sonoma County. Spacing of the plants shall be nine feet by nine feet to allow the trees adequate*

space to grow without competition for light or nutrients. Herbaceous material around the seedlings shall be cleared during the first three years after the plans have been planted. The trees shall be irrigated for three years and protected from browsing herbivores such as deer and cattle for the first three to five years using protective sleeves and fencing. Once the seedlings have reached a height of greater than five feet, the protection shall be removed.

- *Annual monitoring of the planted trees shall be conducted for five years from the time of planting. Monitoring reports shall be submitted annually to the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District.*

Mitigation Measure IV-5: *To protect existing trees during trail construction, the following mitigation measures shall be implemented:*

- *No activities that might cause damage to the root systems by earth-moving equipment shall be allowed.*

- *Temporary flagging or staking shall be placed around those trees that are near the trail but not proposed for limb removal. The temporary flagging or staking shall be installed at a distance equal to one-half of the canopy radius measured outward from the edge of the dripline. No disturbance, including grading, placement of fill material, storage of equipment, etc. shall occur within the designated protective zone for the duration of the project.*

Mitigation Measure IV-6: *If a tree needs to be removed, the tree stump shall be cut as close to the ground as practical. roots and stump can help reduce soil erosion and eliminate the need to bring in heavy equipment. The operation of vehicles or heavy equipment in such areas may facilitate disease spread or lead to soil erosion at the site. If at all practical, tree removal shall be scheduled between June to October when conditions are warm and dry, and to avoid removing diseased trees when moist conditions favor pathogen spread — November to May. A nesting survey, as described in Mitigation Measure IV-1, shall be completed prior to tree removal if such removals are done between February 1 and August 1.*

Mitigation Measure IV-7: *Whenever possible, the tree debris shall be left on site in a safe area where large woody debris will not move, endanger the public, contaminate uninfected hosts, or constitute a fire hazard. When infected oaks are cut down and left on site, branches shall be chipped and larger wood pieces cut and split. Woodpiles shall be stacked in sunny locations to promote rapid drying. Firewood and chips shall not be left in an area where they might be transported to another location (e.g. trailside, parking areas, etc.).*

Proper disposal of infested material is an effective means of limiting pathogen spread. In infested areas, leaving P. ramorum-infected or dead trees on site has not been shown to increase the risk of infection to adjacent trees. Removal from a property is only recommended if it is the first infected tree to be detected in the area, or the fire risk is high, or if the dead tree is a safety hazard. If debris cannot be left on site, infested material shall be disposed of at an approved and permitted dump facility, such as a SOD Busters collection yard.

Mitigation Measure IV-8: *The project shall incorporate the recommendations of the California Oak Mortality Task Force and implement the following sanitation practices for those using trails or walking through Phytophthora-infected areas.*

- ***Identify infected trees within the trail corridor.***

- ***Restrictions of Recreation Activities During the Winter***

  During wet periods, Phytopthora ramorum seems to be most active and therefore most likely to start new infections. If possible, work or recreation in infested forested or shrub-covered areas shall be avoided during the wet, rainy, and cooler times of the year. Muddy conditions shall be avoided whenever possible.

- ***Management of Trail Use***

  The following information shall be prominently displayed on informational signage at the staging area at Jacobs Ranch:

  > *Trail users shall stay on established trails, respect trail closures, and park vehicles or bicycles in designated parking areas and out of the mud.*
  >
  > *The collection and transporting of wood, plants, acorns, leaves, soil or water from streams, ponds or rivers is prohibited.*
  >
  > *Carry cleaning materials in vehicles to use at the end of the trail visit. An old screwdriver, stiff brush, and towel are useful items for removing mud and other debris. An additional level of sanitation is recommended by washing hiking boots and shoes with soap and water or spraying with a disinfectant, such as Lysol© or a 10 percent bleach solution.*

- ***Recommendations for Specific Groups of Trail Users***

  The following information shall be prominently displayed on informational signage at the staging area at Jacobs Ranch:

  > *<u>Hikers/Runners:</u> Remove soil and plant material from your shoes, followed by a water rinse and a disinfectant. If you are frequently in and out of contaminated sites, consider committing footwear for use in that environment only.*
  >
  > *<u>Bicyclists:</u> Remove soil and plant materials from your bike, shoes, and clothes. Rinse your bike and shoes with water and follow with a disinfectant.*
  >
  > *<u>Equestrians</u>: Keep yourself and your horse clean by staying on established trails and out of contaminated areas. Clean any plant material and mud from the horse and its hooves with towels and brushes before leaving the site.*

*Cultural Resources:*__Error! Reference source not found.__**Error! Reference source not found.*Mitigation Measure V-1:** *To protect cultural materials located off the proposed trail but inside the project site, public access shall be restricted and limited to specific areas through restrictive signage, maps, and other means, and a general surface inspection of the area of the project site to which public access is allowed by the project (excluding Jack London State Historic Park, to which public access already exists) shall be completed to identify and record previously reported and unreported historic resources (rock walls, other architectural or land alteration features, concentrations of historic debris) and prehistoric use and occupation areas such as camp sites and quarry areas. These shall be photo-documented to establish a record of their state of preservation prior to the introduction of the trail system. Annual re-inspection of these resources shall be undertaken to assess the impacts which may be caused by park visitors and to aid in the implementation of protective measures for threatened resource areas. If subsequent field investigations of any of these resources reveal that they are in fact being damaged by visitors, proactive measures shall be taken to protect them, as determined by a qualified professional archaeologist to current professional standards. Protective measures may include, but are not limited to, fencing or signage to keep people out of sensitive areas, removal of the resources for protection, burying prehistoric archaeological deposits under imported fill, and protecting prehistoric archaeological deposits by landscaping with poison oak or blackberry plants.*

Mitigation Measure V-2: *The project sponsor (Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District) and construction contractors shall be prepared to respond appropriately if heretofore undetected archaeological resources are encountered anywhere in the project area.*

To set up and facilitate both the recommended monitoring in Mitigation Measure V-4 and the response procedure required under CEQA, a pre-construction meeting shall be arranged involving responsible project personnel, both onsite and managerial supervisory construction personnel, and the archaeological monitors. The purpose of this meeting will be to familiarize all involved parties with the provisions of this plan. Construction contractors shall be prepared to halt and/or relocate work while finds are identified, recorded, evaluated, and if warranted, mitigative activities carried out. In virtually all reasonably foreseeable circumstances, the appropriate mitigation action will be recording and removal of archaeological objects and data from the project area.

The Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District will include a Native American monitor to participate in the pre-construction meeting. The District shall consult with the Native American Heritage Commission for any referral(s) for identify the most appropriate Native American monitor(s) to be invited.

Supervisory and construction personnel shall therefore be made aware of the possibility of encountering archaeological materials in this sensitive zone. In this area, the most common and recognizable evidence of prehistoric archaeological resources are deposits of faunal bone (deer, other mammals, etc.), usually in a dark fine-grained soil (midden); stone flakes left from manufacturing stone tools, or the tools themselves (mortars, pestles, arrowheads and spear points); and human burials, often as dislocated bones. Historic materials older than 45 years (bottles, artifacts, trash pits, structural remains, etc.) may also have scientific and cultural significance and should be more readily identified. If during the proposed construction project any such evidence is uncovered or encountered, all excavations within 10 meters/30 feet shall be halted long enough to call

in the monitoring archaeologists to assess the situation and propose appropriate measures.

Mitigation Measure V-3: *The site of the chert flake scatter in the southern portion of the project site shall be recorded to current standards, including preparation of State Department of Parks and Recreation forms, a photographic baseline study of the cultural resources, and preparation of accurate maps of all resource deposits. Archaeological identification, inventory, evaluation, research and mitigation under provisions of CEQA shall be completely reported in a comprehensive manner, incorporating all methods used and data gained, thorough current scientific analysis of all data, and interpretation of any archaeological resources within a regional archaeological framework. Qualified professional archaeologists shall complete the report to current professional standards, and the data shall be made available to other qualified researchers following completion of the final report.*

Mitigation Measure V-4: *All earth-disturbing activities in the vicinity of the archaeological site SON-2453 shall be monitored by a qualified archaeologist. Archaeological monitoring shall include the following, at a minimum:*

a) Timely notification prior to any excavations;

b) Monitoring during all earth-moving or soil disturbing activities, however minor, until and unless the monitor determines that no impacts to potentially significant archaeological materials will occur;

c) Specific requirements that archaeological monitors be notified immediately if potentially significant archaeological resources are encountered anywhere in the absence of an onsite monitor;

d) Authority of the onsite archaeological monitor to halt excavations if potentially significant archaeological materials or human remains are encountered;

e) Time and space to record, photograph and map, recover, retrieve, and/or remove any significant archaeological materials during the construction process;

f) Time and funding for laboratory cleaning, cataloging, analysis, and preparation for permanent curation of significant archaeological materials after onsite monitoring ends; and

g) Time and funding for a Final Report of findings, to incorporate data developed for this report as appropriate and data developed by monitoring and analysis; additional historical and/or archival research may also be warranted. In addition to reporting to the project sponsor (Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District), copies of the Final Report must be submitted to the Northwest Information Center of the California Historical Resources Information System for inclusion in the permanent archives, and another copy shall accompany any curated archaeological materials and data. Archaeological data, reports, and recovered materials are and will remain the property of the property owners.

The Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District will invite the appropriate Native American monitor to monitor earth-disturbing activities in the vicinity

of the archaeological site SON-2453. The District shall consult with the Native American Heritage Commission for any referral(s) for Native American monitor(s).

As part of the requirements of Mitigation Measure V-4, archaeological identification, inventory, evaluation, research and mitigation under provisions of CEQA shall be completely reported in a comprehensive manner, incorporating all methods used and data gained, thorough current scientific analysis of all data, and interpretation of any archaeological resources within a regional archaeological framework. Qualified professional archaeologists shall complete the report to current professional standards, and the data shall be made available to other qualified researchers following completion of the final report. Appropriate specialized, focused scientific analytic techniques shall be applied (e.g., radiocarbon dating, obsidian sourcing and hydration, typological studies, geomorphological studies, faunal analysis, etc.). Obtaining, analyzing, interpreting, and reporting archaeological data from the project area would serve as mitigative compensation for any project-related impacts to resources.

Mitigation Measure V-5: *In the event that any human remains are encountered during road and/or bridge improvements, all ground–disturbing work shall cease immediately within the area specified by the archaeologist, and the County coroner must be notified immediately. If the coroner determines the remains to be Native American, the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) must be contacted within 24 hours. A qualified archaeologist, in consultation with a Most Likely Descendant named by the Native American Heritage Commission to represent the tribe in any recommendations to expose, remove and rebury the human remains and all associated grave goods, shall recommend subsequent measures for disposition of the remains.*

Mitigation Measure V-6: *If any paleontological resources are encountered during site grading or other construction activities, all ground disturbance shall be halted until the services of a qualified paleontologist can be retained to identify and evaluate the resource(s) and, if necessary, recommend mitigation measures to document and prevent any significant adverse effects on the resource(s).*

Geology and Soils:

Mitigation Measure VI-1: *Implement Mitigation Measure VIII-1.*

Mitigation Measure VI-2: *Trail management of the North Slope Sonoma Mountain Ridge Trail shall contain the following management procedures:*

- *Annual trail maintenance shall include brushing the trail corridor each fall to reduce vegetation growth into the trail travelway. The trail tread and drainage structures shall be maintained each fall to prepare the trail for the winter. After the winter storms, the trail shall be checked as soon as feasible to make any repairs needed.*

- *During operation, the District or facility manager may enact temporary closure to public use due to weather, mud flows, high fire hazard, or other safety concerns or adverse conditions.*

Hazards and Hazardous Materials:

Mitigation Measure VII-1: *Implement Mitigation Measure VIII-1.*

Mitigation Measure VII-2: *Prior to operation, the District or facility manager shall prepare and implement an operational Fire Safety Plan, which shall include provisions for temporary closure to public use due to high fire hazard. The operational Fire Safety Plan shall be reviewed by local emergency service providers and responsible agencies.*

The Fire Safety Plan shall address:

- *Procedures for reporting a fire.*
- *Training to be given operator's employees regarding fire safety.*
- *Procedures to be taken on 'red flag days' (days of extreme fire danger.) On red flag days, trail use would be prohibited.*
- *Fire safety equipment the operator would have on site, e.g. Nomex, fire tents, fire extinguishers, five gallon water pumps, etc.*
- *Procedures to ensure that any power equipment used on the project site is fire safe, and is equipped with spark arrestors.*
- *A trail map clearly indicating emergency vehicle access points and logical landmarks for visitors to use to accurately describe their location within the trail corridor. This map would be shared with emergency service providers for review and input.*

Hydrology and Water Quality:

Mitigation Measure VIII-1: *The project applicant shall develop and implement a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) for construction of the proposed project, as required by the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) and Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB). The SWPPP shall include, at a minimum, the following elements:*

- *Source identification;*
- *Preparation of a site map;*
- *Description of construction materials, practices, and equipment storage and maintenance;*
- *List of pollutants likely to contact storm water;*
- *Estimate of the construction site area and percent impervious area;*
- *Erosion and sedimentation control practices, including soils stabilization, revegetation, and runoff control to limit increases in sediment in storm water runoff, such as detention basins, straw bales, silt fences, check dams, geofabrics, drainage swales, and sandbag dikes;*
- *Proposed construction dewatering plans;*
- *List of provisions to eliminate or reduce discharge of materials to storm water;*
- *Description of waste management practices; and*
- *Maintenance and training practices.*

Mitigation Measure VIII-2: *Implement Mitigation Measure VIII-1.*

Noise:

Mitigation Measure XI-1: *The project sponsor shall ensure that:*

Noise levels produced by construction activities shall not exceed 80-dBA level at any one moment. Construction activities shall be limited to the hours of 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM on Monday through Friday and 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM on Saturdays. Construction activities shall be prohibited on Sunday and any national holiday.

"Quieter" models of equipment, (such as gas or electric equipment as opposed to diesel-powered equipment) shall be used where technology exists, or all construction equipment shall have sound-control devices no less effective than those provided on the original equipment. No equipment shall have unmuffled exhaust.

Loud equipment shall not be staged within 200 feet of noise-sensitive receptors.

The applicant shall designate a "noise disturbance coordinator" who is responsible for responding to any local complaints about construction noise. The noise disturbance coordinator shall determine the source of noise complaints (e.g. starting too early, bad muffler, etc) and institute reasonable measures to correct the problem. A telephone number for the noise disturbance coordinator and approved construction hours shall be posted at the site on conspicuous signage. The noise disturbance coordinator shall contact and advise adjacent noise-sensitive receptors of the construction schedule.

The use of loud sound signals shall be avoided in favor of light warnings except those required by safety laws for the protection of personnel.

Following the commencement of construction and as directed by the County of Sonoma, the contractor(s) shall implement appropriate noise mitigation measures including, but not limited to, changing the location of stationary construction equipment, shutting off idling equipment, rescheduling construction activity, or notifying adjacent residents in advance of construction work.

IMPROVEMENT MEASURES

Improvement Measures are not required to mitigate potentially significant impacts identified in this Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration, but would improve or enhance the proposed project. The District may wish to consider implementing these improvement measures.

Transportation/Traffic:

Improvement Measure XV-1: *Trim the second, third, and fourth trees to the east of the existing driveway on the south side of the road.*

Exhibit 4: Mitigated Negative Declaration

APPENDIX

Biological Resources Tables

A-1. Special Status Plant Species That Have Been Recorded in the Vicinity of Sonoma Mountain Trail Project Area

A-2. Probability of Occurrence of Special Status Plant Species along the Proposed Trail Alignment and Staging Areas

A-3. Trees and Shrubs Known to Be Infected by *Phytophthora ramorum* and Characteristic Symptoms

A-4. Known Invasive Plants in the Sonoma Mountain Project Area

A-5. Wildlife Species Observed Within or Near the Proposed Trail Alignment

A-6. Special Status Animal Species That Have Been Recorded in the Vicinity of Sonoma Mountain Trail Project Area

A-7. Potential Occurrence of Special Status Animal Species Along the Proposed Trail Alignment and Staging Areas

A-8. Migratory Birds Potentially Occurring in Riparian Drainages on the Project Site

A-9. Trail/Access Road Crossings

Table A-1
Special Status Plant Species That Have Been Recorded in the Vicinity of Sonoma Mountain Trail Project Area

Species	Status	Blooming Period	Habitat Notes
Allium peninsulare var. franciscanum Franciscan onion	1B	May - June	Woodland and grasslands on clay or serpentine soils. Known from Sonoma County.
Alopecurus aequalis var. sonomensis Sonoma alopecurus	1B	May - June	Freshwater marsh and swamps, or riparian scrub. Known from Marin and Sonoma Counties.
Amorpha californica var. *napensis* Napa false indigo	1B	April-July	Broadleaf upland forest openings, chaparral, cismontane woodland.
Arctostaphylos canescens ssp. sonomensis Sonoma manzanita	1B	January - April	Chaparral, montane coniferous forest. Known from Sonoma and Mendocino Counties.
Arctostaphylos stanfordiana ssp. decumbens Rincon manzanita	1B	February-April	Chaparral (rhyolitic), woodland. Known from fewer than ten occurrences in Sonoma County.
Astragalus clarianus Clara Hunt's milk-vetch	FE, ST, 1B	March-May	Chaparral openings, cismontane woodlands, and grassland on serpentine, volcanic, rocky, and clay soils.
Balsamorhiza macrolepis var. macrolepis Big-scale balsamroot	1B	March-June	Chaparral, woodland, grasslands often on serpentine.
Blennosperma bakeri Sonoma sunshine	SE, FE, 1B	March-May	Grasslands and vernal pools. Known from Sonoma County.
Brodiaea californica var. *leptandra* Narrow-anthered California brodiaea	1B	May-July	Broadleaf upland forest, chaparral, lower montane coniferous forest.
Carex albida White sedge	FE, SE, 1B	May-July	Bogs and fens, marshes and swamps (freshwater)
Ceanothus confuses Rincon Ridge ceanothus	1B	February - April	Closed-cone coniferous forest, chaparral, grasslands
Ceanothus divergens Calistoga ceanothus	1B	February - March	Chaparral (serpentine or volcanic, rocky soils)
Ceanothus pupureus Holly-leaved ceanothus	1B	February - June	Chaparral, woodland, volcanic, rocky soils.
Ceanothus sonomensis Sonoma ceanothus	1B	February - April	Chaparral (sandy, serpentine or volcanic soils).
Centromadia parryi ssp. parryi Pappose tarplant	1B	May-November	Coastal Prairie, meadows and seeps, marshes and swamps, valley and foothill grassland
Delphinium luteum	1B	March-May	Chaparral, coastal prairie, coastal scrub

Table A-1
Special Status Plant Species That Have Been Recorded in the Vicinity of Sonoma Mountain Trail Project Area

Species	Status	Blooming Period	Habitat Notes
Yellow larkspur			
Downingia pusilla Dwarf downingia	2	March-May	Valley and foothill grassland, vernal pools
Erigeron angustatus Narrow-leaved daisy	1B	May- Sept.	Perennial herb present in serpentine chaparral. Known from vicinity of Soda Creek Road and Sage Canyon, east of Lake Hennessey.
Erigeron biolettii Streamside daisy	3	June - September	Broadleaved upland forest, cismontane woodland, North Coast coniferous forest/rocky soils. Location, rarity, and endangerment information needed.
Eriogonum luteolum var. caninum Tiburon buckwheat	3	June - September	Chaparral, coastal prairie, grassland/serpentinite.
Erodium macrophylum Round-leaved filaree	2	March-May	Cismontane woodland, valley and foothill grassland
Fritillaria liliacea Fragrant fritillary	1B	February - April	Woodland, coastal prairie, coastal scrub, grassland/often serpentinite.
Hemizonia congesta ssp. leucocephala Hayfield tarplant	3	April - October	Coastal scrub, grassland. Known from Sonoma County.
Hesperolinon congestum Marin western flax	FT,ST, 1B	April- July	Chaparral, valley and foothill grassland on serpentinite
Lasthenia burkei Burke's goldfields	FE, SE,1B	April - June	Meadows and seeps, vernal pools
Lasthenia conjugens Contra Costa goldfields	FE, 1B	Mar-June	Shallow volcanic soils in chaparral (Napa County), grassland, vernal pools, or low depressions and swales in grassy areas.
Layia septentrionalis Colusa layia	1B	April-May	Chaparral. Cismontane woodland and grassland on sandy, serpentinite.
Legenere limosa *Legenere*	1B	April - June	Vernal pools
Lessingia hololeuca Wooly-headed lessingia	3	June - October	Broadleaved upland forest, coastal scrub, montane coniferous forest, grassland on clay or serpentine soils.
Leptosiphon jepsonii *Jepson's leptosiphon*	IB	April - June	Chaparral, cismontane woodland usually on volcanic soils
Limnanthes vinculans Sebastopol meadowfoam	SE, FE, 1B	April - May	Meadows and seeps, grasslands, and vernal pools.
Lupinus sericatus Cobb Mountain lupine	1B	March-June	Broadleaf upland forest, chaparral, cismontane woodland, lower montane coniferous forest.
Micropus amphibolus	3	March - May	Broadleaved upland forest, chaparral, woodland, grassland.

Table A-1
Special Status Plant Species That Have Been Recorded in the Vicinity of Sonoma Mountain Trail Project Area

Species	Status	Blooming Period	Habitat Notes
Mt. Diablo cottonweed			
Microseris paludosa Marsh microseris	1B	April - June	Closed-cone coniferous forest, woodland, coastal scrub, grassland.
Navarretia leucocephala ssp. *bakeri* Baker's navarretia	1B	May-July	Cismontane woodland, lower montane coniferous forest, meadows, grassland, vernal pools.
Navarretia leucocephala ssp. *plientha* Many-flowered navarretia	SE, FE, 1B	May - June	Vernal pools
Navarretia myersii ssp. myersii Pincushion navarretia	1B	May	Vernal pools
Penstemon newberryi var. *sonomensis* Sonoma beardtongue	1B	June-August	Crevices in rock outcrops and talus slopes in chaparral. Known from Rector Reservoir.
Plagiobothrys mollis var. vestitus Petaluma popcorn-flower	1A	June - July	Marshes and swamps (coastal salt), valley and foothill grasslands.
Plagiobothrys strictus Calistoga popcorn-flower	ST, FE, 1B	March - June	Meadows and seeps, grasslands, and vernal pools in alkaline areas near thermal springs.
Pleuropogon hooverianus *North Coast semaphore grass*	ST, 1B	April	Broadleaf upland forest, meadows and seeps, north coast coniferous forest
Rhynchospora globularis var. globularis Round-headed beacked-rush	2	July - August	Marshes and swamps
Sidalcea oregana ssp. *valida* Kenwood Marsh checkerbloom	SE, FE, 1B	June - September	Freshwater marshes and swamps. Known from three small locations in Sonoma County.
Streptanthus breweri var. *hesperidis* Green jewel-flower	1B	May-July	Chaparral openings and cismontane woodland on serpentinite and rocky soils.
Trifolium amoenum Showy Indian clover	FE, 1B	April - June	Coastal bluff, grassland.
Trifolium depauperatum var. hydrophilum Saline clover	1B	April - June	Marshes and swamps, grasslands, vernal pools.
Vibunum ellipticum Oval-leaved viburnum	2	May - June	Chaparral, woodland, montane coniferous forest.

*Key to status codes:

FE Federal Endangered

FT Federal Threatened

SE State Endangered

Table A-1

Special Status Plant Species That Have Been Recorded in the Vicinity of Sonoma Mountain Trail Project Area

Species	Status	Blooming Period	Habitat Notes

ST State Threatened

1A Presumed Extinct

1B List 1B CNPS list of plants rare, threatened or endangered in California and elsewhere

2 List 2 CNPS list of plants rare, threatened, or endangered in California but more common

3 List 3 CNPS list of plants needing more information for listing

4 List 4 CNPS list of plants having limited distribution

Source: CNDDB (Sears Point, ,Petaluma River, Petaluma, Rutherford, Glen Ellen, Kenwood, Sonoma, Cotati, and Santa Rosa , USGS Topographic Quadrangles – March 24, 2006), and CNPS Electronic Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants (Sears Point, Petaluma River, Petaluma, Rutherford, Glen Ellen, Kenwood, Sonoma, Cotati, and Santa Rosa Quadrangles, March 24, 2006).

Table A-2

Probability of Occurrence of Special Status Plant Species along the Proposed Trail Alignment and Staging Areas

Species	Probability of Occurrence
Allium peninsulare var. franciscanum Franciscan onion	Historically found elsewhere in Sonoma County from an old 1880 record near Petaluma, a 1938 record of occurrence on ocean bluffs near Bodega Bay, and a 1950 record of an observation in the Kenwood-Hope Valley area. Species is associated with dry, barren hillsides. Species would have a **low probability** of occurrence and not seen on the trail alignment or in the proposed staging areas during the May field surveys.
Amorpha californica var. *napensis* Napa false indigo	Found elsewhere in Sonoma County in shaded under story of Douglas fir, black oak, Oregon white oak, madrone, and bay on volcanic soils. Species would have a **moderate probability** of occurrence but not seen on the trail alignment or in the proposed staging areas during the May field surveys.
Brodiaea californica var. *leptandra* Narrow-anthered California brodiaea	In other areas of Sonoma County, occurs primarily in chaparral vegetation cover dominated by manzanita and chamise, with a few oaks and ceanothus. Species would have a **low probability** of occurrence and not seen on the trail alignment or in the proposed staging areas during the May field surveys.
Erigeron biolettii Streamside daisy	Data on this species is poorly documented but it is known to occur on dry slopes, rocks, and rocky ledges along rivers. Species would have a **low probability** of occurrence and not seen on the trail alignment or in the proposed staging areas during the May field surveys.
Erodium macrophylum Round-leaved filaree	Found throughout California, southern Oregon, and northern Baja California (Mexico) for which very little ecology is known. The plant is restricted to heavy clay soils. Most populations are found on the eastern side of the Coast Ranges in California. The clay soils on which it is found typically have low cover of native and exotic

Table A-2

Probability of Occurrence of Special Status Plant Species along the Proposed Trail Alignment and Staging Areas

Species	Probability of Occurrence
	species. The only recorded occurrence of the species in Sonoma County is from an 1880 observation near Petaluma at an elevation of 30 feet above sea level. Species would have a low probability of occurrence and not seen on the trail alignment or in the proposed staging areas during the May field surveys.
Fritillaria liliacea Fragrant fritillary	Known to occur elsewhere on Sonoma Mountain along moist grassland edges of oak woodland at the margin of vernal swales. Species would have a moderate probability of occurrence but the trail and staging areas would not intersect such habitat types and the fragrant fritillary was not seen on the trail alignment or in the proposed staging areas during the May field surveys.
Lessingia hololeuca Wooly-headed lessingia	In Sonoma County, the most recent record of species occurrence is a 1983 observation in gravelly serpentine soil near Monte Rio and Camp Meeker. Other sightings in 1960, near Occidental, and 1947, near Guerneville were on serpentine outcrops and soil. As the Sonoma Mountain Trails project area does not contain serpentine soils, the species would have a low probability of occurrence. The wooly-headed lessingia was not seen in the trail alignment or in the proposed staging areas during the May field surveys.
Leptosiphon jepsonii Jepson's leptosiphon	Other than scientific studies on the reproduction strategies of this species, there is little information known about its ecological distribution in Sonoma County. The annual is a narrow endemic of the California North Coast Region and is known to occur in chaparral and woodland vegetation communities on volcanic soils. A 1993 observation at Pepperwood Ranch Natural Preserve was associated with serpentine outcrops. Such vegetation cover type does not occur in the project area. Species would have a low probability of occurrence and was not seen on the trail alignment or in the proposed staging areas during the May field surveys.
Lupinus sericatus Cobb Mountain lupine	Found elsewhere in Sonoma County in chaparral vegetation dominated by Arctostaphylos, chamise, coyote brush, with madrone, scrub oak, Ponderosa pine, and black oak. Such vegetation cover type does not occur in the project area. Species would have a low probability of occurrence and was not seen on the trail alignment or in the proposed staging areas during the May field surveys.
Micropus amphibolus Mt. Diablo cottonweed	A 1965 record indicates a species occurrence near Sonoma Historical State Park on a grassy slope near rocks. Older records from 1934 indicate the plant was observed near Healdsburg on grassy slopes. There are no historic records of the species in the Sonoma

Table A-2 Probability of Occurrence of Special Status Plant Species along the Proposed Trail Alignment and Staging Areas	
Species	Probability of Occurrence
	Mountain area. Species would have a low probability of occurrence and was not seen on the trail alignment or in the proposed staging areas during the May field surveys.
Pleuropogon hooverianus *North Coast semaphore grass*	In other areas of Sonoma County, occurs in freshwater marsh with associated sedges and rush; but is also known to occur in nearby Marin County in shady grassland areas under trees. The proposed trail and staging areas would not intersect such habitat types. Species would have a low probability of occurrence and not seen on the trail alignment or in the proposed staging areas during the May field surveys.
Streptanthus breweri var. *hesperidis* Green jewel-flower	In other areas of Sonoma County and Napa County the species is associated with serpentine soils, serpentine slopes, and serpentine woodlands. The proposed trail and staging areas would not intersect such habitat types. Species would have a low probability of occurrence and not seen on the trail alignment or in the proposed staging areas during the May field surveys.
Vibunum ellipticum Oval-leaved viburnum	In Sonoma County, the species occurs in chaparral and yellow-pine forest, generally on north-facing slopes in open woods, thickets and bottomlands. The proposed trail and staging areas would not intersect such habitat types. Species would have a low probability of occurrence and not seen on the trail alignment or in the proposed staging areas during the May field surveys.

Table A-3 Trees and Shrubs Known to Be Infected by *Phytophthora ramorum* and Characteristic Symptoms	
Species	**External symptoms and indications**
California bay laurel *(Umbellularia californica)*	Leaves have necrotic lesions.
California black oak *(Quercus kelloggii)*	Seeping is the earliest visible symptom, but is often obscured by the fissured, dark brown, nearly black bark. The presence of bark beetles' boring dust and fruiting bodies of the fungus *Hypoxylon* may be more reliable indicators of infection.
California buckeye *(Aesculus californica)*	Leaf spots and lesions on petioles.
Coast live oak *(Quercus agrifolia)*	Seeping from the lower trunk is the most reliable early symptom. This appears as red to brown stains, or often as hardened brown to red droplets. When the tree dies, the foliage may turn color to reddish brown within weeks. Bark beetle boring dust and *Hypoxylon* fungi may be present. Dead and stained moss may be evident.
Tanbark oak, Tanoak *(Lithocarpus densiflorus)*	Abnormal foliage is often the first symptom, showing dead leaves intermixed with green. Branch tips and basal

	shoots may wilt and turn brown ("shepherds' crook"), while the leaves on the rest of the stem remain green. When the tree dies, the foliage may turn color to reddish brown within weeks. Seeping cankers on the trunk usually within 6 feet of the ground, but sometimes much higher can appear as red to brown stains, or as droplets, often translucent red, exuded from the intact bark. Dead lichens and moss may be evident as well as *Hypoxylon* fungi and red or white boring dust from bark beetles.
Madrone *(Arbutus menziesii)*	Leaf spots and necrotic areas; twig cankers and dieback.
Big-leaf maple *(Acer macrophyllum)*	Leaf spots and necrosis on leaf margins. Scorch-like lesions on leaves.
Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*)	Yellowing and discoloration of branches and necrotic lesions.
Coast redwood *(Sequoia sempervirens)*	Yellowing and discoloration of branches and necrotic lesions.
Toyon *(Heteromeles arbutifolia)*	Dark foliar spots, at times demarcated by a thick black line. Branch lesions and unusual death of entire plant.
Manzanita (*Arctostaphylos* spp.)	Leaf spots and necrotic areas; twig cankers and dieback. Water-soaked appearance of cankers and the absence of black fungal reproductive structures (pycnidia), differentiate *P. ramorum* from those caused by *Botryosphaeria*.
California coffeeberry *(Rhamnus californica)*	Leaf spots and necrotic areas; twig cankers and dieback.

Table A-4
Known Invasive Plants in the Sonoma Mountain Project Area

Scientific Name	Common Name	Invasiveness	Where Found in NW California and General Impacts
Aira caryophyllea	Silver hairgrass	C	Widespread in grasslands, but impacts appear to be negligible.
Bromus diandrus	Rip-gut grass	B	Very widespread in grasslands, woodlands, and forests but monotypic stands uncommon
Bromus hordeaceus	Soft chess	C	Widespread in many habitats, but primarily in converted annual grasslands.
Bromus madritensis ssp, rubens	Foxtail chess	B	Grasslands and woodlands
Carduus pycnocephalus	Italian thistle	B	Very widespread in forest, grasslands, and woodlands. Impacts may be variable regionally.
Convolvulus arvensis	Morning glory	B	Only known as agricultural weed.
Erodium botrys	Storksbill	C	Present in wild lands but known impacts are negligible. Often transient.
Erodium cicutarium	Filaree	C	Widespread in many habitats. Impacts minor in wild lands.

Table A-4 Known Invasive Plants in the Sonoma Mountain Project Area			
Scientific Name	Common Name	Invasiveness	Where Found in NW California and General Impacts
			High-density populations transient.
Geranium dissectum	Geranium	B	Numerous habitats but impacts appear minor.
Hordeum murinum	Wild barley	B	Widespread invasive of wetlands but generally does not form dominant stands.
Hypochaeris glabra	Smooth cat's ear	B	Widespread in woodlands. Impacts appear to be minor. Some local variability.
Hypochaeris radicata	Hairy cat's ear	B	Widespread in forests and woodlands. Impacts appear to be minor.
Lolium multiflorum	Italian ryegrass	B	Widespread in grasslands and oak woodland. Widely used for post-fire erosion control. Impacts can vary with region.
Rubus discolor	Himalayan blackberry	A	Riparian areas, marshes, and oak woodlands.
Rumex crispus	Curly dock	C	Widespread in grasslands, meadows, and riparian habitats. Impacts appear to be minor.
Source: California Invasive Plant Council Invasive Plant Inventory, 2006 Invasiveness Categories: A = Severe, B=Moderate, C=Limited			

Table A-5 Wildlife Species Observed within or near the Proposed Trail Alignment	
Birds	*Mammals*
Wild turkey	Black-tailed Deer
Turkey Vulture	Western Gray Squirrel
Red-tailed Hawk	Black-tailed Jackrabbit
Mourning Dove	Brush Rabbit
Northern Flicker	Mountain Lion
Violet-green Swallow	
Scrub Jay	*Reptiles/Amphibians*
Steller's Jay	Western Rattlesnake
American Crow	Western Skink
Common Raven	Alligator Lizard
Oak Titmouse	California Newt
Chestnut-backed Chickadee	
Dark-eyed Junco	
California Towhee	

Table A-6
Special Status Animal Species That Have Been Recorded in the Vicinity of Sonoma Mountain Trail Project Area

Species	Status	Habitat Notes
Invertebrates		
California freshwater shrimp (*Syncaris pacifica)*	FE,SE	Riparian scrub and woodland in perennial drainages with undercut banks and overhanging vegetation
Sonoma arctic skipper (*Carterocephalus palaemon magnus)*	FSC, CSC	Redwood and evergreen forest
Amphibians/Reptiles		
California red-legged frog (*Rana aurora draytoni)*	FT	Typically found in riparian and freshwater marsh, but known to disperse considerable distances through grassland and other habitats.
California tiger salamander (*Ambystoma californiense*)	FT, CSC	Breeds in vernal pools, swales, drainages, and ponds. Aestivates in burrows and other moist retreats in grassland, savanna, and fields.
Foothill yellow-legged frog *(Rana boylii)*	FSC, CSC	Riparian-dependent species typically in second order streams with mature trees and bed of gravel, cobble, or boulders.
Western pond turtle *(Clemmys marmorata)*	FSC, CSC	Freshwater streams, pools and ponds with secure haul out along banks and adjacent uplands for egg-laying.
Birds		
Bank swallow *(Riparia riparia)*	ST	Nests in stream banks and cliffs with friable soils.
Northern spotted owl *(Strix occidentalis caurina)*	FT	Evergreen forest and woodland with suitable prey, typically wood rat.
Mammals		
Pallid bat *(Antrozous pallidus)*	CSC	Varied foraging habitat with abandoned structures, mines, caves used for roosting where disturbance is minimal.

*Key to status codes:

FE Federal Endangered
FT Federal Threatened
SE State Endangered
ST State Threatened
FSC Federal Species of Concern
CSC State Species of Special Concern

Source: CNDDB (Sears Point, Petaluma River, Petaluma, Rutherford, Glen Ellen, Kenwood, Sonoma, Cotati, and Santa Rosa, USGS Topographic Quadrangles – March 24, 2006).

Table A-7

Potential Occurrence of Special Status Animal Species along the Proposed Trail Alignment and Staging Areas

Species	Preferred Habitat	Potential Occurrence
California freshwater shrimp (*Syncaris pacifica)*	Riparian scrub and woodland in perennial drainages with undercut banks and overhanging vegetation	Vernal pools, low-gradient streams, with exposed live tree roots (e.g., willows and alders) of undercut banks, or overhanging woody debris or vegetation. Such features are absent from project area creeks and drainage ways. Species has a low probability of occurrence.
Sonoma arctic skipper (*Carterocephalus palaemon magnus)*	Redwood and evergreen forest	The subspecies is restricted to two northern Sonoma County populations. One is near the Russian River (Guerneville); the other is at Plantation. The main food plant is *Calamogrostis*, a fairly common but locally restricted plant in coastal areas, generally with coastal pines and coyote brush. Populations have been found in second growth redwood forests, at the edge of forested clearings, in deep shade. The host food source is absent from the project area. Species has a low probability of occurrence.
California red-legged frog (*Rana aurora draytoni)*	Lowlands & foothills in or near permanent sources of deep water with dense, shrubby or emergent riparian vegetation	Species occurs primarily in isolated ponds or pools or streams where water remains standing long enough for breeding and development of young, and there is dense emergent or shoreline vegetation closely associated with deep, still, or slow-moving water. The habitats observed to contain the highest densities of red-legged frogs are associated with deep-water pools (27 inches deep) with stands of overhanging willows and an intermixed fringe of cattails, tules, or sedges. No quiet pools of streams with dense, emergent vegetation, deep permanent pools, and other water bodies that remains long enough for breeding and development of young (Jennings and Hayes 1994)[49] occur on the project site. Species has a low probability of occurrence. The frog could use the riparian scrub as upland aestivation or dispersal habitat, but in the absence of a source population, this is only a potential habitat use. The species is not expected to occur on the project site.
California tiger salamander (*Ambystoma californiense*)	Annual grass habitats, grassy understory of	No suitable underground refuges such as ground squirrel burrows near vernal pools or other seasonal water sources occur on the

[49] Jennings, M.R. and M.P. Hayes. 1994. Amphibian and reptile species of special concern in California. California Department of Fish and Game, Sacramento.

Table A-7

Potential Occurrence of Special Status Animal Species along the Proposed Trail Alignment and Staging Areas

Species	Preferred Habitat	Potential Occurrence
	valley-foothill hardwood habitats. Breeds in vernal pools and other temporary rainwater ponds.	project site. Most of the occurrences of this subspecies in Sonoma County are from the complex of vernal pools and drainages of the Santa Rosa Plain along the Laguna de Santa Rosa watershed, generally between Sebastopol, Santa Rosa, and Cotati. Species has a low probability of occurrence.
Foothill yellow-legged frog *(Rana boylii)*	Partially-shaded, shallow streams & Riffles with a rocky (cobble-sized) substrate	This species is rarely encountered far from permanent water. There is no surface water or pools on the site. Species has a low probability of occurrence.
Western pond turtle *(Clemmys marmorata)*	Permanent bodies of water. Require basking sites including partially submerged logs, vegetation mats, or open mud banks.	Required aquatic habitat does not occur on the project site. Species has a low probability of occurrence.
Bank swallow *(Riparia riparia)*	Nests in stream banks and cliffs with friable soils.	In Sonoma Country, there is a 1960 observational record of bank swallows near Jenner. Species is a colonial nester requiring vertical bank/cliffs with fine-textured/sandy soils near streams, rivers, lakes, and ocean water to dig nesting holes. Such habitat features do not occur in the project area. Species has a low probability of occurrence.
Northern spotted owl *(Strix occidentalis caurina)*	Evergreen forest and woodland with suitable prey, typically wood rat.	The USFWS listed the northern spotted owl as a threatened species in 1990. The southern limit of their range extends across the coastal and inland forests and woodlands of Sonoma County southward into Marin County. Occurrences of this species extend along the entire coast of the county, the Mayacamas Mountains, and Sonoma Mountain. There are no old--growth coniferous forests or mixed stands of old-growth and mature conifer trees on the project site. Species has a low probability of occurrence.
Pallid bat *(Antrozous pallidus)*	Varied foraging habitat in abandoned structures, mines, caves used for roosting.	Roosting habitat such as rock outcrops, caverns, hollow trees, buildings, and bridge abutments do not occur on the project site. Species has a low probability of occurrence.

Table A-8 Migratory Birds Potentially Occurring in Riparian Drainages on the Project Site		
Species	Foraging Pattern	Nesting Habitat[50]
Cooper's hawk	Catches small birds, especially young during nesting season, and small mammals, reptiles, and amphibians. Hunts in broken woodland and habitat edges. Uses cover to hide, attack, and approach prey; also soars and makes low, gliding search flights.	Nests in deciduous trees in crotches of conifer trees on horizontal branches. Nest is a stick platform lined with bark. Usually nest in second-growth conifer stands, or in deciduous riparian areas, usually near streams.
Allen's hummingbird	Hoovers to take nectar from a variety of herbaceous and woody flowering plants; also eats insects and spiders. Shrubs and trees near foraging areas provide cover.	Often attaches nest to more than one lateral support on eucalyptus, juniper, willow, other trees, vines, shrubs, or ferns. Nest sometimes placed at the end of branches of shrub or tree or on tree trunk; often placed in shade of overhanging cover.
Rufous hummingbird	Takes nectar from a variety of flowering plants; also eats insects, spiders, and tree sap. Uses riparian areas, open woodland and other habitats rich in nectar-producing flowers, including gardens and orchards. Hovers while taking nectar and insects, which it gleans from foliage and flowers; also hawks insects from the air. Trees and shrubs provide cover in many habitats, including lowland riparian, open woodlands, scrub, and chaparral.	Nest is an open cup, usually on a sloping shrub or conifer tree branch near the ground.
Olive-sided flycatcher	Ventures out for flying insects over forest canopy or adjacent meadows, clearings, or shrub-covered slopes in wide-ranging flights from high, conspicuous perches. Favors honeybees.	Requires large, tall trees, usually conifers, for nesting and roosting sites; also lofty perches, typically the dead tips or uppermost branches of the tallest trees in the vicinity, for singing posts and hunting perches. Nest is an open cup of grasses, mosses, lichens, rootlets, and pine needles; usually placed in a conifer tree, well out on a horizontal limb.
Lark sparrow	Eats seeds, grains, and insects, especially grasshoppers. Takes insects and seeds from litter on ground, from herbaceous plants, and occasionally from shrubs and trees. Scattered trees and shrubs are required for lookout and song perches and other cover. Fence posts, large rocks, other elevated sites, and ground herbage also provide cover.	Nest usually built on ground in herbage shaded by tussock or small shrub. Occasionally nests in shrub or tree, or found in crevices of cliffs.
Lawrence's goldfinch	Uses trees and shrubs for resting, escape, and other cover. Perches on fences and transmission lines. Eats mostly seed; also a few insects. Favored seeds include pigweed, fiddleneck, starthistle, and chamise. Feeds on forbs and shrubs,	Builds nest in dense foliage of a tree or shrub. Prefers to nest in oak trees, or in a riparian thicket.

[50] Source: California Wildlife Habitat Relationship System, Database Version 7.0, California Department of Fish and Game, and California Interagency Wildlife Task Group.

Table A-8 Migratory Birds Potentially Occurring in Riparian Drainages on the Project Site		
Species	Foraging Pattern	Nesting Habitat[50]
	plucking seeds from plants. Also gleans seeds from the ground	
Hermit warbler	Gleans insects and spiders from foliage in middle to upper canopy of live oak woodlands, deciduous tees, and planted pines.	Mature stands of pine and fir provide cover in breeding season. Builds nest in conifer trees, well out on a horizontal branch.
Common yellowthroat	Mostly seeks cover in thick tangles in fresh and brackish wetlands. Eats insects, especially caterpillars and other larvae; also spiders and a few seeds.	Occasionally breeds in dense shrubs and lush fields. Nest usually on or within 3 inches of the ground. May be over water in emergent aquatic vegetation, dense shrubs, or other dense growth.
Yellow warbler	Usually found in riparian deciduous habitats: cottonwoods, willows, alders, and other small trees and shrubs typical of low, open-canopy riparian woodland. Feeds mostly on insects and spiders. Cleans and hovers in upper canopy of deciduous trees and shrubs. Occasionally hawks insects from the air, or eats berries.	Nest is an open cup laced above ground in a deciduous sapling or shrub.
Loggerhead shrike	Frequents open habitats with sparse shrubs and trees, other suitable perches, bare ground, and low or sparse herbaceous cover. Feeds in areas of shrubs or small trees. Eats mostly large insects; also takes small birds, mammals, amphibians, reptiles, fish, carrion, and various other invertebrates. Searches for prey from a perch and usually flies directly to prey on ground or in a shrub, and sometimes hovers. Frequently skewers prey on thorn, sharp twig, or wire barb.	Builds nest on stable branch in densely foliaged shrub or tree, usually well concealed.

Table A-9 Trail/Access Road Crossings				
Number	Location	Width (Top of Bank at OHW)	Crossing Features	Proposed Project Crossing Structure
1	North of Hayfields Trail	16.0 feet	Dry, rocky bed within bay canopy	Rock crossing
2	Skiles Fee Portion	25.0 feet	Dry, rocky bed within bay buckeye canopy	Rock crossing
3	Skiles Fee Portion	16.0 feet	Flowing water, rocky bed within bay canopy	Rock crossing
4	Skiles Fee Portion	10.0 feet	Flowing water, rocky bed within bay and black oak canopy	Rock crossing
5	Skiles Fee Portion	16.0 feet	Dry, rocky bed within bay and big leaf maple canopy	Rock crossing
6	Skiles Fee Portion	10.0 feet	Flowing water, rocky bed within bay canopy	Rock crossing
7	Skiles Fee	24.0 feet	Wet, rocky bed within bay canopy	Rock crossing

	Portion			
8	Jacobs Ranch	26.0 feet	Flowing water, rocky bed within redwood, bay and maple canopy	Bridge crossing
9	NE side of Jacobs Ranch	20.0 feet	Wet grassy, linear drainage way	Rock crossing
10	Wilroth	12.0 feet	Flowing water, rocky bed within redwood and bay canopy	Bridge crossing
11	Sonoma Mtn. Woodlands	9.0 feet	Dry, rocky bed within bay canopy	Rock crossing
12	Sonoma Mtn. Woodlands	8.0 feet	Dry, rocky bed within bay canopy	Rock crossing
13	Wilroth	12.0 feet	Dry, rocky bed within bay canopy	Bridge crossing
14	Jacobs Ranch East	8.0 feet	Dry, rocky bed within bay canopy	Rock crossing
Spur Trail	Cooper's Grove East Side	6.0 feet	Dry, rocky bed within redwood and bay canopy	Bridge crossing
Replacement Bridge	Wooden Bridge – Jacobs Ranch Access Rd.	24.0 feet	Matanzas Creek within bay and alder canopy	Existing Site-Built Bridge
OHW = Ordinary High Water				

COMMENTS AND RESPONSES FOR MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION: NORTH SLOPE SONOMA MOUNTAIN RIDGE TRAIL PROJECT

February 2008

Prepared For:

Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District
747 Mendocino Avenue, Suite 100
Santa Rosa, CA 95401

Prepared By:

Michael Kent and Associates
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In Association With:

LandPeople
TOVA Applied Science & Technology
Holman & Associates
Whitlock and Weinberger Transportation, Inc.

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APPENDIX A-1

Notice of Intent to Adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration. October 15, 2007.

State Clearinghouse letter and Document Details Report

Proof of Publication, *The Press Democrat.* October 21 and 28, 2007.

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SECTION 1
INTRODUCTION

OVERVIEW

This Comments and Responses document, along with the Draft Initial Study/Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) including Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program, for the proposed North Slope Sonoma Mountain Ridge Trail Project was prepared by Michael Kent & Associates for the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District. The Draft Initial Study/Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration was prepared pursuant to the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), to inform decision makers and the general public the potential impacts related to the proposed project. The document identified mitigation measures that reduce potential project impacts to a less-than-significant level.

The Draft Initial Study/Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration was circulated for public and agency review on October 15, 2007. The 30-day review period ended on November 15, 2007. The comment period provided an opportunity for the public and agencies to review the issues addressed and to offer comments on any aspect of the process, or the adequacy of the evaluation and mitigation measures. The Intent to Adopt the Mitigated Negative Declaration was noticed in the Press Democrat on October 21 and October 28, 2007. Notice was also sent to property owners within 1 kilometer of the trailhead, and interested local agencies and parties. Written, oral, and email comments were received during the comment period. These are reproduced and responded to in Sections 2 and 3 of this Comments and Responses document.

This Comments and Responses document serves as an addendum to the Draft Initial Study/Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration. The Draft Initial Study/Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration together with this Comments and Responses document constitute the Final Mitigated Negative Declaration that will be considered for adoption by the Board of Directors of the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District, as discussed below.

As required by law, and to facilitate implementation of all mitigation measures adopted through the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) process, the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (Appendix A of the Draft Initial Study/Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration, as modified by this Comments and Responses document) identifies the timing of, and the agency or agencies responsible for, enforcement and monitoring of each mitigation measure.

The Draft Initial Study/Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration, including the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program, and this Comments and Responses document will be considered by the Board of Directors of the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District in their review of the proposed project at a properly noticed public meeting. Their review will also include the North Slope Sonoma Mountain Ridge Trail Project. The Board of Directors will make the final determination on the adequacy of the Mitigated Negative Declaration at this meeting.

ORGANIZATION OF COMMENTS AND RESPONSES

This section (Section 1) provides an introduction and overview. Section 2 contains the written comments received and the District's response to the comments. Section 3 contains the oral comments received and the District's response to the comments. Section 4 contains revisions to the Draft Initial Study/Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration resulting from the responses to comments and staff-initiated text changes. Section 5 contains the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program. The Appendix includes the Notice of Intent to Adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration, State Clearinghouse letter and Document Details Report, and proof of publication.

SECTION 2
RESPONSES TO WRITTEN COMMENTS

Section 2 includes written responses to the comments received during the public review period that commenced on October 15, 2007 and ended on November 15, 2007. The following organizations, individuals, and state, local, and regional agencies provided written comments during the comment period.

1. California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG)
2. Bay Area Ridge Trail Council
3. Bennett Valley Homeowners Association
4. Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria
5. LandPaths
6. Sonoma County Trails Council

State of California – The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
http://www.dfg.ca.gov
POST OFFICE BOX 47
YOUNTVILLE, CALIFORNIA 94599
(707) 944-5500

ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER, Governor

November 7, 2007

Ms. Kim Batchelder
Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation
and Open Space District
747 Mendocino Avenue, Suite 100
Santa Rosa, CA 95401

Dear Ms. Batchelder:

Subject: North Slope Sonoma Mountain Ridge Trail Project, Sonoma County

The Department of Fish and Game (DFG) has reviewed the documents provided for the subject project, and we have the following comments.

Please provide a complete assessment (including but not limited to type, quantity and locations) of the habitats, flora and fauna within and adjacent to the project area, including endangered, threatened, and locally unique species and sensitive habitats. The assessment should include the reasonably foreseeable direct and indirect changes (temporary and permanent) that may occur with implementation of the project. Rare, threatened and endangered species to be addressed should include all those which meet the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) definition (see CEQA Guidelines, Section 15380). DFG recommended survey and monitoring protocols and guidelines are available at http://www.dfg.ca.gov/hcpb/species/stds_gdl/survmonitr.shtml. 1.1

For 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, DFG may require a Streambed Alteration Agreement (SAA), pursuant to Section 1600 et seq. of the Fish and Game Code, with the applicant. Issuance of SAAs is subject to CEQA. DFG, as a responsible agency under CEQA, will consider the CEQA document for the project. The CEQA document should fully identify the potential impacts to the stream or riparian resources and provide adequate avoidance, mitigation, monitoring and reporting commitments for completion of the agreement. To obtain information about the SAA notification process, please access our website at www.dfg.ca.gov/1600; or to request a notification package, contact the Streambed Alteration Program at (707) 944-5520. 1.2

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CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME (CDFG)

1.1. As noted in IV. Biological Resources, Introduction, on page 26 of the Draft IS/MND, a biological assessment was prepared by an independent consultant for the proposed project. The findings of the assessment are presented in IV. Biological Resources, and Appendix A of the Draft IS/MND. The assessment included local habitats, flora and fauna, and endangered, threatened, and locally unique species. The assessment also identified potential impacts to these biological resources, and mitigation required to reduce impacts to a less than significant level.

1.2 The biological assessment consultant for the proposed project (see IV. Biological Resources, and Appendix A of the Draft IS/MND) included an evaluation of potential impacts on stream and riparian resources, identified potential impacts to these biological resources and mitigation required to reduce impacts to a less than significant level, and discussed permitting requirements including the "Streambed Alteration Agreement" from the California Department of Fish and Game (Department) pursuant to Section 1601-1603 of the State Fish and Game Code.

Kim Batchelder
Natural Resources Planner
Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation
and Open Space District

RE: North Slope Sonoma Mountain Ridge Trail Project
Comments on Draft Initial Study/Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration

15 November 2007

Dear Mr. Batchelder,

Attached please find the Bay Area Ridge Trail Council's comments on the Draft Initial Study/Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND), dated October 2007, for the North Slope Sonoma Mountain Ridge Trail Project.

The Bay Area Ridge Trail Council (Ridge Trail Council) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Our mission is to complete the Bay Area Ridge Trail, a public trail route, on the ridgelines surrounding the San Francisco Bay. As planned, the Bay Area Ridge Trail (Ridge Trail) will connect public open spaces and parklands in the nine Bay Area counties and will provide over 550 miles of ridgeline trail. As of November of this year there are 310 miles of dedicated Ridge Trail serving the recreational needs of hikers, equestrians, mountain bicyclists, trail runners, and outdoors enthusiasts of all ages. The Ridge Trail receives widespread support from local agencies and organizations throughout the San Francisco Bay Area, including hundreds of volunteers helping to build and maintain sections of the Ridge Trail. Funding support for the Ridge Trail has been generously given by individuals, groups, cities, counties, park departments and districts, open space districts, corporations, foundations, and state agencies, including the California Coastal Conservancy and the California Department of Parks and Recreation, and through Propositions 12, 40 and 84.

The Ridge Trail Council's comments on the Draft IS/MND are listed on Attachment 1 of this letter.

If you have any questions about these comments, please contact me by email at ridgetrailnorth@comcast.net or by phone at 707.823.3236. We request that responses to these comments be circulated to us in writing at the following address: Bay Area Ridge Trail North, attention Dee Swanhuyser, 1800 Jonive Road, Sebastopol, CA 95472.

Sincerely,

Dee Swanhuyser,
North Bay Trail Director

Cc: Janet McBride, Executive Director
Bay Area Ridge Trail Council

Attachment 1 (page 1 of 1)

Bay Area Ridge Trail Council's comments on the Sonoma Mountain Ridge Trail Project Draft IS/MND

The Bay Area Ridge Trail Council supports the following public access/trail aspects identified in the Draft IS/MND:

1. Trail Design, page 3, and the vegetative cut back procedures along trail alignment. It is important, for safety of trail users, to have a 10' ceiling and an 8' width throughout the trail corridor and equally important to protect the trees by cutting limbs carefully and removing as few trees as possible. **2.1**
2. Trail Users, page 14 - The accommodation of hikers, equestrians and mountain bicyclists in the trail and staging area designs is well thought out. **2.2**
3. Biological Resources Mitigation Measure IV-4, page 39 – The location of the reforestation site proposed to be near the staging area is appropriate and the species selection to avoid Sudden Oak Death are both important to the future health of the forested areas of this neighborhood. **2.3**
4. Geology and Soils Mitigation Measures VI-1 & VI-2 – The trail management procedures (and those implemented during the project's construction phase) to avoid erosion and other possible soil related impacts are well thought out and are fully consistent with Bay Area Ridge Trail Council's management guidelines. **2.4**
5. We appreciate the level of detail in this document as well as the clarity of the writing. **2.5**

The Bay Area Ridge Trail Council recommends the following changes be incorporated into the Draft IS/MND:

1. On Figure I –
    a. Add the location of the ADA access site to Figure I.
    b. Add the label, "Sonoma State University" to Fairfield Osborn Preserve so that it can be easily identified in #5 on page 1, "Project Location." **2.6**
2. Trail Spurs, page 11 –
    a. The first spur is described as a "one way segment." Please clarify that trail users will be able to travel either way on this trail and further clarify that the trail ends or deadens and trail users must return to the main trail. Defining it as a "one way segment" may be confusing in this context. **2.7**

The second spur – it should be noted that this spur is also a loop trail that connects back to the main Ridge Trail alignment in two locations as shown on Figure I. **2.8**

BAY AREA RIDGE TRAIL COUNCIL

2.1 Comment noted. No response is required.

2.2 Comment noted. No response is required.

2.3 Comment noted. No response is required.

2.4 Comment noted. No response is required.

2.5 Comment noted. No response is required.

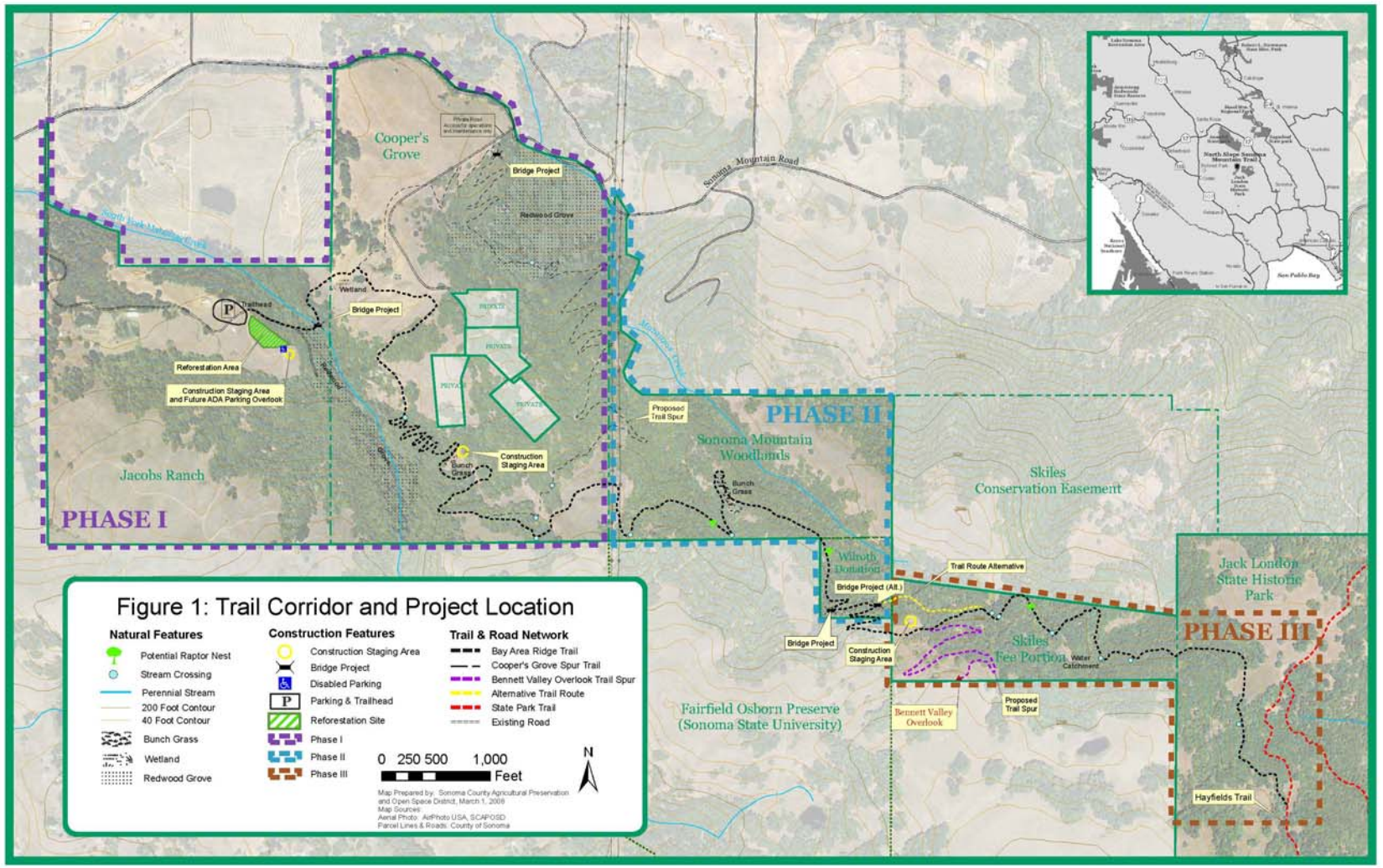
2.6 Figure 1, page 5 of the Draft IS/MND is revised to label the ADA parking overlook, and add "Sonoma State University" to the Fairfield Osborn Preserve. The revised Figure 1 is shown on page **Error! Bookmark not defined.**.

2.7 The last sentence of the first paragraph on page 11 of the Draft IS/MND is revised as follows (additions underlined, deletions shown in ~~strikethrough~~):

> This trail spur would be a deadend~~one-way~~ segment (users must return to the main trail) with only minimal infrastructure at the end destination point such as hitching posts and benches.

2.8 The second sentence of the second paragraph on page 11 of the Draft IS/MND is revised as follows (additions underlined, deletions shown in ~~strikethrough~~):

> This loop trail spur would start from the southern portion of the Cooper's Grove property, and travel north on the east side of the in-holdings as it winds downhill to the Cooper's redwood grove, a well-developed, second growth redwood forest (see Figure 1: Trail Corridor and Project Location, which shows the two connections of the spur and the main trail).


Cooper's Grove
Bridge Project
Redwood Grove
Sonoma Mountain Road
Wetland
Trailhead
Bridge Project
Reforestation Area
Construction Staging Area and Future ADA Parking Overlook
Jacobs Ranch
PHASE I
Construction Staging Area
Bunch Grass
Proposed Trail Spur
PHASE II
Sonoma Mountain Woodlands
Skiles Conservation Easement
Wilroth Donation
Trail Route Alternative
Bridge Project (Alt.)
Bridge Project
Construction Staging Area
Skiles Fee Portion
Water Catchment
Jack London State Historic Park
PHASE III
Fairfield Osborn Preserve (Sonoma State University)
Bennett Valley Overlook
Proposed Trail Spur
Hayfields Trail
Figure 1: Trail Corridor and Project Location
Natural Features
Potential Raptor Nest
Stream Crossing
Perennial Stream
200 Foot Contour
40 Foot Contour
Bunch Grass
Wetland
Redwood Grove
Construction Features
Construction Staging Area
Bridge Project
Disabled Parking
Parking & Trailhead
Reforestation Site
Phase I
Phase II
Phase III
Trail & Road Network
Bay Area Ridge Trail
Cooper's Grove Spur Trail
Bennett Valley Overlook Trail Spur
Alternative Trail Route
State Park Trail
Existing Road
0 250 500 1,000
Feet
N
Map Prepared by: Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District, March 1, 2006
Map Sources
Aerial Photo: AirPhoto USA, SCAPOSD
Parcel Lines & Roads: County of Sonoma

Bennett Valley
Homeowners Association
P.O. Box 2866, Santa Rosa, CA 95405

November 15, 2007

Kim Batchelder
Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District
747 Mendocino Avenue. Suite 100
Santa Rosa, CA 95401-4850

Re : **Initial Study for North Slope Sonoma Mountain Ride Trail Project**

Dear Mr. Batchelder:

On behalf of the Bennett Valley Homeowners Association (BVHA), thank you for your presentation last night concerning the proposal to develop a hiking trail from Jacobs Ranch to Jack London State Historical Park. The BVHA was established in 1970 and is dedicated to promoting and preserving the rural, residential character and natural environment of Bennett Valley. The BVHA is enthusiastic about the proposed trail and strongly supports increased opportunities for residents of our area to enjoy the many public parks that surround us. Ironically, few Bennett Valley residents have easy access to the parks adjacent to us, and many drive thirty minutes or more for hiking opportunities. This situation needlessly adds to traffic congestion and pollution. 3.1

As planning and construction of the trail proceeds, we request that the District maximize opportunities for dog owners to hike the trail with dogs on leashes. 3.2 We also request that you work with the Board of Supervisors and County Transportation Department to ensure that the roads that provide access to the trailhead on Sonoma Mountain Road are properly maintained. 3.3 The additional traffic going to and from the trailhead may exacerbate some of the maintenance problems that we have been experiencing.

Thank you for your proposal, and we look forward to working with you as the project is implemented.

Sincerely,

/s/ Craig S. Harrison

Craig S. Harrison
President

BENNETT VALLEY HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION

3.1 Comment noted. No response is required.

3.2 The Draft IS/MND (fourth paragraph on page 14) incorrectly states that District policy prohibits dogs on the trail. The District does not have a policy prohibiting dogs in open space areas. Dog restrictions are included in the proposed project because of policies adopted by landowners within this trail corridor. The fourth paragraph on page 14 of the Draft IS/MND is revised as follows (additions underlined, deletions shown in ~~strikethrough~~):

> ~~As per District policy prohibiting dogs on Open Space Preserve lands, d~~Dogs would not be permitted on the trail corridor. This management recommendation is consistent with the dog restrictions within Jack London State Historic Park and the Fairfield Osborn Preserve. Other typical open space preserve rules regarding protection of native plants and animals, staying on designated trail, and respecting private property would be posted.

3.3 The issue of adequacy of existing levels of road maintenance is a pre-existing condition that does not pertain to the environmental impacts of the proposed project. As discussed in XV. Transportation/Traffic, on pages 74-83 of the Draft IS/MND, the proposed project would generate a relatively small amount of additional vehicle traffic, which would have a less than significant impact on local traffic conditions. For similar reasons, project-generated traffic would have a less than significant impact on existing conditions and maintenance requirements.

FEDERATED INDIANS OF GRATON RANCHERIA

Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria
Sacred Sites Protection Committee
6400 Redwood Rd. Suite 300
Rohnert Park, CA 94928
707- 566-2288

Nov. 9, 2007

Kim Batchelder
Natural Resources Planner
Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District
747 Mendocino Avenue, Suite 100
Santa Rosa, CA 95401

RE: North Slope Sonoma Mountain Ridge Trail Project
Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration

Dear Kim:

The Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria (FIGR) appreciates the opportunity to comment regarding our sacred lands and other cultural resources contained within this project property. The Sacred Sites Protection Committee makes the following official comments on your request for a proposed mitigated negative declaration.

The Cultural Resources section, Mitigation Measure V-4 states "All earth-disturbing activities in the vicinity of the archaeological site SON-2453 shall be monitored by a qualified archaeologist." Archaeologists have training only in identifying the scientific importance of cultural resources. Only a Native American monitor from FIGR is able to identify the cultural significance of resources and their proper treatment. We therefore request a Tribal monitor be present with the archaeologist. This is the only mitigation that we feel will reduce the impact to cultural resources. 4.1

For the same reasons, it is important the Tribal monitor participate in preconstruction meeting of construction and supervisory personnel. Again, FIGR's monitor is the only person qualified to instruct personnel on the cultural significance of the area and resources impacted. 4.2

Please contact us with your response and for more information on our monitoring program.

Sincerely,

Nick Tipon
Chairman: Sacred Sites Protection Committee

707 478-1737
ntipon@comcast.net

RECEIVED
DATE 11/13/07
C: MC/KB
O: File

FEDERATED INDIANS OF GRATON RANCHERIA

4.1 Mitigation Measure V-2 on pages 45-46 of the Draft IS/MND is revised as follows (additions underlined, deletions shown in ~~strikethrough~~):

> ***Mitigation Measure V-2:*** *The project sponsor (Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District) and construction contractors shall be prepared to respond appropriately if heretofore undetected archaeological resources are encountered anywhere in the project area.*
>
> *To set up and facilitate both the recommended monitoring in Mitigation Measure V-4 and the response procedure required under CEQA, a pre-construction meeting shall be arranged involving responsible project personnel, both onsite and managerial supervisory construction personnel, and the archaeological monitors. The purpose of this meeting will be to familiarize all involved parties with the provisions of this plan. Construction contractors shall be prepared to halt and/or relocate work while finds are identified, recorded, evaluated, and if warranted, mitigative activities carried out. In virtually all reasonably foreseeable circumstances, the appropriate mitigation action will be recording and removal of archaeological objects and data from the project area.*
>
> *The Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District will include a Native American monitor to participate in the pre-construction meeting. The District shall consult with the Native American Heritage Commission for any referral(s) for identify the most appropriate Native American monitor(s) to be invited.*
>
> *Supervisory and construction personnel shall therefore be made aware of the possibility of encountering archaeological materials in this sensitive zone. In this area, the most common and recognizable evidence of prehistoric archaeological resources are deposits of faunal bone (deer, other mammals, etc.), usually in a dark fine-grained soil (midden); stone flakes left from manufacturing stone tools, or the tools themselves (mortars, pestles, arrowheads and spear points); and human burials, often as dislocated bones. Historic materials older than 45 years (bottles, artifacts, trash pits, structural remains, etc.) may also have scientific and cultural significance and should be more readily identified. If during the proposed construction project any such evidence is uncovered or encountered, all excavations within 10 meters/30 feet shall be halted long enough to call in the monitoring archaeologists to assess the situation and propose appropriate measures.*

Staff has carefully reviewed the revisions to Mitigation Measure V-2, to determine if these revisions constitute a new, significant effect or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified effects, or if the proposed mitigation measure will not reduce potential effects to less than significance, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Sections 15073.5 and 15162(a). Staff concludes that this revised mitigation measure does not constitute new significant impacts or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified effects, that the substituted and revised mitigation measure is equal to or more effective than the original mitigation measure, that the proposed mitigation measure will

reduce potential effects to less than significance, and that recirculation of the Draft IS/MND is not required.

4.2 Mitigation Measure V-4 on pages 47-48 of the Draft IS/MND is revised as follows (additions underlined, deletions shown in ~~strikethrough~~):

> ***Mitigation Measure V-4:*** *All earth-disturbing activities in the vicinity of the archaeological site SON-2453 shall be monitored by a qualified archaeologist. Archaeological monitoring shall include the following, at a minimum:*
>
> *a) Timely notification prior to any excavations;*
>
> *b) Monitoring during all earth-moving or soil disturbing activities, however minor, until and unless the monitor determines that no impacts to potentially significant archaeological materials will occur;*
>
> *c) Specific requirements that archaeological monitors be notified immediately if potentially significant archaeological resources are encountered anywhere in the absence of an onsite monitor;*
>
> *d) Authority of the onsite archaeological monitor to halt excavations if potentially significant archaeological materials or human remains are encountered;*
>
> *e) Time and space to record, photograph and map, recover, retrieve, and/or remove any significant archaeological materials during the construction process;*
>
> *f) Time and funding for laboratory cleaning, cataloging, analysis, and preparation for permanent curation of significant archaeological materials after onsite monitoring ends; and*
>
> *g) Time and funding for a Final Report of findings, to incorporate data developed for this report as appropriate and data developed by monitoring and analysis; additional historical and/or archival research may also be warranted. In addition to reporting to the project sponsor (Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District), copies of the Final Report must be submitted to the Northwest Information Center of the California Historical Resources Information System for inclusion in the permanent archives, and another copy shall accompany any curated archaeological materials and data. Archaeological data, reports, and recovered materials are and will remain the property of the property owners.*
>
> *The Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District will invite a Native American monitor to monitor earth-disturbing activities in the vicinity of the archaeological site SON-2453. The District shall consult with the Native American Heritage Commission for any referral(s) for Native American monitor(s).*

As part of the requirements of Mitigation Measure V-~~4~~2, archaeological identification, inventory, evaluation, research and mitigation under provisions of CEQA shall be completely reported in a comprehensive manner, incorporating all methods used and data gained, thorough current scientific analysis of all data, and interpretation of any archaeological resources within a regional archaeological framework. Qualified professional archaeologists shall complete the report to current professional standards, and the data shall be made available to other qualified researchers following completion of the final report. Appropriate specialized, focused scientific analytic techniques shall be applied (e.g., radiocarbon dating, obsidian sourcing and hydration, typological studies, geomorphological studies, faunal analysis, etc.). Obtaining, analyzing, interpreting, and reporting archaeological data from the project area would serve as mitigative compensation for any project-related impacts to resources.

Staff has carefully reviewed the revisions to Mitigation Measure V-4, to determine if these revisions constitute a new, significant effect or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified effects, or if the proposed mitigation measure will not reduce potential effects to less than significance, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Sections 15073.5 and 15162(a). Staff concludes that this revised mitigation measure does not constitute new significant impacts or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified effects, that the substituted and revised mitigation measure is equal to or more effective than the original mitigation measure, that the proposed mitigation measure will reduce potential effects to less than significance, and that recirculation of the Draft IS/MND is not required.

November 15, 2007

Kim Batchelder
Natural Resources Planner
Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation & Open Space District
747 Mendocino Ave., Suite 100
Santa Rosa, CA 95401

Dear Kim,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Initial Study and proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration for the above project.

LandPaths would like to express support for the proposed trail and access point improvements. Significant public interest in the trail has been demonstrated by the large turnouts on the joint District / LandPaths "preview" tours of this trail. This trail will provide an important recreational resource. **5.1**

In addition, we offer the following specific comments and suggestions:

- **Staging area at Jacobs Ranch:** Efforts should be made to retain the "look and feel" of the Jacobs Ranch. The history of the ranch should be highlighted through interpretive signage, brochures, etc. **5.2**
- **Proposed restroom at Jacobs Ranch:** Consideration should be given to a composting toilet for the sake of reducing the impacts of pumping and transport of waste. **5.3**
- **Staging area operation:** Consideration should be given to the inclusion of the Jacobs Ranch Volunteer Patrollers (joint program between LandPaths and the District) and other local volunteers in the operation of the trail and trailhead facilities. Volunteers have put in many hours already on the property and have expressed interest in continued programs. Volunteers could serve as Trail Patrollers, providing a significant (and free) public safety service. **5.4**
- **Trail development and maintenance:** Consideration should be given to the use of local volunteers in the development and maintenance of the trail. Volunteers have put in many hours already on the property and have expressed interest in continued programs. Volunteers could serve on trail crews, reducing cost and providing a significant "community investment" benefit. **5.5**

Sincerely,

Jonathan Glass
Field Programs Director
LandPaths

LANDPATHS

5.1 Comment noted. No response is required.

5.2 This comment does not pertain to the environmental effects of the proposed project. However, the District will work with the contractor to ensure that Jacobs Ranch maintains its ranch character and functionality while serving as a trailhead and parking facility for the North Slope Sonoma Mountain Ridge Trail.

5.3 This comment does not pertain to the environmental effects of the proposed project. This is an excellent suggestion and will be taken into consideration by the District during the development of the construction bids.

5.4 This comment does not pertain to the environmental effects of the proposed project. The District recognizes the value of all volunteers that have supported the property management and patrols of, not only Jacobs Ranch, but other fee-owned properties throughout Sonoma County. The District intends to continue to rely on these volunteers for constructing, monitoring and patrolling the staging area on Jacobs Ranch and the North Slope trail.

5.5 See response to comment 5.4.

SONOMA COUNTY TRAILS COUNCIL

P.O. Box 14483, Santa Rosa, CA 95402
Email: sonomacountytrails@gmail.com
Web:www.sonomacountytrails.org

November 15, 2007

Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District
Attn: Kim Batchelder
747 Mendocino Avenue, Suite 100
Santa Rosa, CA 95401-4850

Dear Kim:

The Sonoma County Trail Council (SCTC) submits this letter in support of the District's plans for the proposed North Slope Sonoma Mountain Ridge Trail. The trail will provide numerous opportunities for hikers, equestrians, and cyclists to experience some of Sonoma County's most precious landscapes. **6.1**

We encourage that a reasonable user management plan be incorporated into this project. As with many public lands, seasonal trail closures to equestrians and cyclists are often an ineffective approach to trail management. Please consider managing this trail based on soil moisture content, not seasonal closures. This approach will allow users to experience the trail during dry periods within the winter season. **6.2**

The SCTC believes fair recreational opportunities are vital for a healthy community. These opportunities also include activities such as organized volunteer trail construction and maintenance. We strongly encourage the District to utilize the local community of experienced trail stewards. By incorporating local volunteer labor, the District is more likely to recruit individuals who are invested and dedicated to the project. **6.3**

As you know, SCTC strives to promote on a local level the establishment and improvement of public trails open to all non-motorized visitors. Our organization is the oldest shared-use organization in the country, and we have seen the realization of many great projects. We believe that the North Slope Sonoma Mountain Ridge Trail will be a great addition to our County's trail system, and we enthusiastically endorse this project. **6.4**

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Rob D. Helms, Executive Director

SHARE - ADVOCATE - STEWARD

SONOMA COUNTY TRAILS COUNCIL

6.1 Comment noted. No response is required.

6.2 Comment noted. The District will consider options to monitor trail conditions and appropriate uses during the winter months. Until the trail is adequately cured and stable, high impact uses may be restricted during the first winter.

6.3 Comment noted. The District recognizes the value of all volunteers that have supported the property management and patrols of, not only Jacobs Ranch, but other fee-owned properties throughout Sonoma County. The District intends to continue to rely on these volunteers for constructing, monitoring and patrolling the staging area on Jacobs Ranch and the North Slope trail.

6.4 Comment noted.

SECTION 3
RESPONSES TO ORAL AND EMAIL COMMENTS

Section 3 includes oral and email responses to the comments received during the public review period that commenced on October 15, 2007 and ended on November 15, 2007. "Public Comment on North Slope Sonoma Mountain Ridge Trail Project", below, presents numbered oral and email comments. Numbered responses to each comment follow the summary of comments. The following individuals and organizations provided oral or email comments on the Draft IS/MND during the comment period.

1. Kathleen Daly
2. Ellyn Jaques Boone
3. Dottie Gilardi and Joseph Embry
4. Craig Harrison
5. Cindy Goede
6. Pam Frank
7. Nancy Codding
8. Deborah Scholey
9. Nancy Schultz
10. Charles "Chip" Roberson
11. Tony Dollenz
12. Anne Abrams
13. Vincent Hoagland – Chair, Sonoma County Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee
14. Carol Todd
15. Barbara Greenhill
16. Susan Loesch
17. Kathryn Gilmore
18. Gordon Endow
19. John Campbell and Pam Nadeau
20. Bob Edwards, President - Sonoma Valley Dog Owners and Guardians

21. Mary Ellen Oertel and Raymond Masnack

22. Gwyn Williams-Stanton

23. Victor Reus, M.D.

24. Mary Poe

25. Helen Bates

26. Craig S. Harrison – President – Bennett Valley Homeowners Association

27. Marilee Jensen

28. Craig Harrison

29. Karl Keener

30. Julie Watson

PUBLIC SUMMARY

Public Comment on North Slope Sonoma Mountain Ridge Trail Project

11-5-07

1. Kathleen Daly – Dog Owner – Telephone call to District Office

Comments:

Ms. Daly is upset that the District will not allow dogs on the North Slope trail. She is a conscientious dog owner who respects leash laws and believes more effort has to be focused on the irresponsible pet owners who do not keep their dogs on leashes. However, she also mentions that she does let her dogs off leash when on private property and explained that her dogs are voice recall controlled and responsive.

She explained that she has lived in Sonoma County for 15 years and is constantly seeing new trails opened where dogs are prohibited and she's running out of places to go hiking with her dogs. She wondered how a horse is any more environmentally friendly than dogs. She also likes horses and would optimally like to go horseback riding with her dogs but that is not permitted. She is a tax payer and believes she should have the right to take her dogs onto land protected by the District and her tax money. She suggested some ways to invest in dog training programs and certifying dogs that are well trained and suggested the District and public officials should not be so black and white about dogs being allowed on these publically protected lands.

2. Ellyn Jaques Boone – Dog Owner – Emailed comments

Comments:

"I am writing with regard to the new trail system to be developed, linking the Jacobs Ranch with Jack London State Park, and my concern that dogs will not be permitted on these trails under any circumstances. This is disappointing news -- the taxpayers who share their lives with one or more dogs in their household are by far <u>not</u> a minority in this County. And the fact that horses and mountain bikes <u>are</u> allowed on these trails leads me to believe that the prohibition of our dog companions is not based on protection of wildlife. While hiking the County's trails where I am allowed to take my dog, I have been nearly run over and injured by speeding mountain bikers...but never by a dog! And I have seen the erosion caused by the bikes -- but none by dog paws!

I am urging the Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District to reconsider this prohibition on allowing our dog companions to enjoy these open spaces and trails with their people. Banning our canine friends from these areas is probably not what the majority of taxpayers would want...and I am surprised that so few people are aware of this restriction."

3. Dottie Gilardi and Joseph Embry – Dog Owners – Emailed comments

Comments:

"We have just received news that the new trail along Sonoma Mountain that will open soon will not be allowing dogs on the trail even on a leash. Also it appears that soon all dogs will not be allowed on any trails. We are appaled to hear of this decision. Excuse me, but if this is true, what are you thinking? We voted for open space in order we can enjoy our beautiful County and walk our dogs. They are very much apart of our family and share this feeling with most of our friends. We consider ourselves responsible pet owners and never walk without picking up our dog messes. Please advise if this action is true or is it just an oversight and will be corrected. If this is the plan, then we will have to

initiate action of somekind including letters to the editors and whatever else it takes to correct this. **We appriciate your timely response.**
Thank you / Dottie Gilardi and Joseph Embry"

11/6/2007

4. Craig Harrison – volunteer Patrol for Jacobs Ranch – dog owner – comments via email
   Comments:

"…On the merits of the dog policy, it's hard to respond to a policy when that policy is not explained within the document. That's why I'd like a written copy of the District's dog policy that was referred to on page 14. If there is no written policy, that's fine with me and I won't ask further about it.

I spent years as a biologist for the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and have some fairly deep appreciation of wildlife conservation issues. If we are concerned about impacts to wildlife in this area, we shouldn't be putting in a hiking trail in the first place. The explanation I would like to see is the incremental impact of allowing a dog on a leash once you have decided to cut a new trail in the first place. I had this discussion with my college room mate Dr. David Graber just last week, who is the chief scientist of the Pacific West Region of the National Park Service. He could think of no biological reason to justify keeping dogs out once you have created a trail for hikers. Of course, there is a leash law for the entire county, so keeping dogs under control is already the law."

5. Cindy Goede –dog owner – comments via email
   Comments:

"As a taxpaying dog owner I am expressing my hope that all Sonoma County trails, both current and new, allow leashed dogs. I am careful of my dog when we walk and always clean up after her. We live in one of the most beautiful areas of the country- please allow us to continue using it!"

6. Pam Frank– dog owner – comments via email
   Comments:

"I was very disturbed to hear that the Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District major trail system on the north slope of Sonoma Mountain with the new 4-mile trail linking Jacobs Ranch is going to prohibit dogs.

As dog owners, even though we are numerous in Sonoma County we have very few options to get out and hike with our dogs and I think that is a shame. I also own a home in Truckee and they don't have the same restriction and welcome dogs on trails in many areas without any adverse effects.

As a female dog owner I also find comfort in having my dog with me when I'm hiking from a safety standpoint.

Please consider our rights as well when you are making your final decision.

Thank you for your time and consideration."

7. Nancy Codding - a registered voter and resident for 52 years, and owner of 2 dogs. – via e-mail
   Comments:

“I would like to register my disapproval of the anti-dog policies per the below information.”

8. Deborah Scholey – Dog owner – via email
   Comments:

“I understand that a prohibition on dogs walking in Sonoma County Open Space is being considered. I cannot tell you how unfair that I think this is. I own & pay taxes on 2 houses in Sonoma County & have done so for many, many years. I understand that around 50% of Sonoma county residents own dogs. This seems highly prejudicial. Also, I just do not see the rationale of not allowing dogs. I rarely see dogs off of leashes in Sonoma & everyone I see carries their little doggie bags. Occasionally I see that a dog (raccoon?) has defecated on a trail but as a responsible owner, I pick that up too. Maybe there could be dog owner patrols (volunteers assigned to not only walk their dogs but look out for rule breakers)? I love to walk alone & had looked forward to having more trails in Sonoma County to do so, but I won’t walk alone without a dog.

Please continue to keep an open mind about open space. Dog owners are major tax payers too!!”

11/7/2007

9. Nancy Schultz – Dog owner – via email
   Comments:

“Regarding the proposed new trails on the North Slope of Sonoma Mountain, please consider that Dogs need open spaces too. I think it is wonderful that horses are part of the proposal on the new trails. Bikes, ok, too. But, please include our dogs. Please take a moment and just think about all the good that our four legged friends do for us. Let us do a little more for them.
Thank you.”

10. Charles "Chip" Roberson – Dog owner – via email
    Comments:

“I was recently surprised to learn about the "no dogs in public open space" policy recommended by the Sonoma County Open Space District. As dog own and tax payer, I wish to write in opposition to this policy.

In 1990, we approved a sales tax to protect agricultural and open space lands from being developed. Last year, when we voted to extend this tax for another 20 years I was unaware that this dog exclusion policy was being considered. Had I known that fact, I would have not only voted "no" but I would have actively campaigned against it.

I do not understand the bias people have against dogs when so many Sonomans are dog owners and we obviously invest a lot of time, money and energy in taking care of them. Being dog-friendly can actually be a positive factor for a community. For example, my wife and I visit Carmel-by-the-Sea at least twice a year (staying at the Cypress Inn and spending approximately $2000 each visit) particularly because it is dog friendly. There are other, cheaper places we could stay or visit but the acceptance of our dogs is a key attraction for us and we're not alone.

If there are issues regarding specific behavior, please address those behaviors. Using the broadsword of an outright trail ban (especially when, as I understand it, horses and bicyclists are allowed) is not a choice I can support. I would like to point out that my

family currently owns 4 horses and I'm the founder of the local cycling club. We have a long history of dogs inhabiting the same spaces as horses and cyclists without incident. In fact, if you go to a horse show, you will see there are dogs everywhere. Additionally, I would argue that dogs are no more damaging to plant life and native species than are humans, bicycles and horses.
Please reconsider this policy. Thank you."

11. Tony Dollenz – Dog owner – via email

Comments:

"I voted for the sales tax last November picturing my dogs using this new trail system. Now I find out that dogs will be excluded but riding mountain bikes and horses will not. This is unfair! and I strongly oppose the exclusion of my dogs from enjoying this new trail.

Who has given anyone the right to arbitrarily exclude the dogs from enjoying this new open space trail? Dogs are less of a nuisance than people riding mountain bikes and they sure leave less fecal waste than a horse. At least we pick up after our dogs! Place plastic bags like we now have at Sonoma Park at the beginning and end of the new trail.

If you can do something about this by tallying and/or forwading my objection to the appropriate people/department I will certainly appreciate it. If you can think of something else I can do to help prevent this exclusion from happening, please let me know."

12. Anne Abrams - Dog owner – via email

Comments:

"I live in Sonoma and drive to San Francisco for work. I endure the commute because I treasure living in such a beautiful environment, so I appreciate all efforts to maintain, care for and preserve the beauty of Sonoma County. All the good work done by dedicated public servants like yourselves is important.

It is also important however, to represent all the people who live in Sonoma County and to maintain the environment we all enjoy in all the many diverse ways we enjoy it.

I am disturbed to learn that you are recommending to ban dogs, even on leash, on trails in these Open Spaces.
Please do not move forward with this recommendation.

Statistics support the majority of people who live in Sonoma County and have dogs and all of us happily experience the bounty of our Open Spaces as we walk our dogs there.

That you would allow horses on these trails and not dogs, surprises and disturbs me. Although I recognize that there are some irresponsible dog owners, most dog owners are very responsible and respectful of their environment and certainly more dog owners pick up after their dogs, than the people who ride their horses on these trails and don't even know what they leave behind.

In 1990, Sonoma County voters approved a sales tax to protect agricultural and open space lands from being developed. Thus far, the Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District has protected over 70,000 acres of land in the county. Last year, we voted to extend this tax for another 20 years to open these lands for public use. I do not

believe the dog exclusion policy was really promoted and it is important now that you give dog owners an opportunity to be heard on this issue.

Please take note of my opposition to this recommendation and reconsider.
This is very important.

Thank you."

11/10/2007

13. Vincent Hoagland – Chair, Sonoma County Bicycle &
Pedestrian Advisory Committee – via email

Comments:

"As the chair of the Sonoma County Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee, I know that comments are helpful and if nothing else, to show that some citizens are taking a look at the proposal. So, since I see that November 15 is fast approaching, I thought I had better comment.

I am a cyclist, although rarely a mountain biker, and my wife is an equestrian so we both have interests in the new trail. I did the hike several months ago indicating where at least part of the trail coming from Jacobs Ranch would potentially go and look forward to its completion.

One concern that Margo and I had about the trailhead area is the amount of parking if there is a horse rental or riding facility that has been talked about as a possibility for Jacobs Ranch. Would that work out of the barn near the main house or the trailhead area?

While there is a comment on page 14 that there would be a way for mountain bikers to get through or around the Sonoma Mountain Woodlands section, is this route in the IS/MND and I didn't see it?"

11/11/2007

14. Carol Todd - Dog owner – via email

Comments:

"Please inform me as to why dogs are not allowed on open space and other trails. We miss the oportunities that we had in Tilden Park.Our dogs are small, well behaved and we pick up after them."

15. Barbara Greenhill – Dog Owner – via e-mail

Comments:

"Please don't ban the dogs from the trails. Where should we walk our dogs?
Dogs are such an important factor in all our lives. A world without dogs – do we really need that? In Sonoma?"

16. Susan Loesch– Dog Owner – via e-mail

Comments:

"The idea to ban dogs from trails is ridiculous. Please consider me in opposition to this plan!"

17. Kathryn Gilmore– Dog Owner – via e-mail

Comments:

"I am writing to urge you to reconsider your recommendation to ban dogs from tax supported Open Space under development in Glen Ellen and Sonoma. I hope you will listen to the multitude of us who can't comprehend your recommendation. Please allow dogs!"

18. Gordon Endow – Dog Owner – via e-mail

Comments:

"Page 14 of the Draft Initial Study of the North Slope Sonoma Mountain Ridge Trail Project states that although horseback riding would be permitted generally on the proposed trail between Jacobs Ranch and Jack London State Park, dogs -- even on leashes -- would be excluded. **This is another example of Government screwing up a good thing.**

I live on Sonoma Mountain and have two dogs. So I would use the trail a lot, but for the proposed restriction. There is no good reason not to allow dogs on leashes on the trail. For example, Howarth Park and Spring Lake Park allow dogs on leashes, and I use those parks frequently to walk my dogs. (In contrast, I rarely go to Jack London State Park because of its restrictions on dogs.) I would love to be able to simply walk my dogs on the road, but Pressley Road and Sonoma Mountain Road are much too narrow and the speed limit too high to be able to do so safely.

As with Howarth and Spring Lake parks, which are city and county owned, respectively, there should be signs requiring not only dogs to be on leashes, but also for dog owners to clean up after their dogs. There should also be sturdy, vandalism-resistant trash receptacles at the trail heads to encourage owners to tidy up.

I realize that there may not be the maintenance staff that the city and county have for their other parks, but the trash receptacle at the trail head in Jack London State Park, along with the other trash cans there, can be maintained by that park. The project plan calls for a staging area at the other end, with new public parking (including parking for seven horse-trailers), picnic tables, and an asphalted driveway with several turnouts. The county will have to have maintain the Jacobs Ranch staging area, which should include maintaining the trash receptacle. This would appear to be similar to Crane Creek park on Pressley Road.

Even if for some unfathomable reason a trash receptacle could not be maintained, that is not a sufficient reason not to allow dogs on the trail. I am a responsible dog owner, and if there are posted signs requiring owners to pick up after their dogs, I would follow the signs. On the other hand, I would certainly feel excluded if I could not take my dogs on the trail with me.

I voted for the Open Space sales tax and have supported it *in the past*. But I swear, if dogs are not allowed on a trail I helped pay for, I will vote against it in the future. Not only that, I will actively campaign against it, ***as well as against those who would impose such an unreasonable restriction***.

I am generally not a single issue voter. However, this is so ridiculous and out-of-hand, that I will not sit idly by. (As you might guess, when I first learned of this restriction, I had

a visceral reaction.) I would estimate that a good 80% of us living on Sonoma Mountain have at least one dog. We have already begun to band together and, if necessary, will make a big issue of this.

Please change the draft rule that would exclude dogs from being taken on leashes on the trail. Except for that, I would support the trail."

19. John Campbell and Pam Nadeau– Dog Owner – via e-mail

Comments:

"As Sonoma County taxpayers and responsible dog walkers we would like to voice our opposition to the policy of banning dogs (even leashed dogs) from the Open Space Trail and other open space areas.

Allowing horses and mountain bikers, but not dogs does not make sense; both horses and bikes have a much greater impact on the trail system than do dogs and hikers. Horses also pose a danger to hikers because of their spooky nature. Further, we have yet to observe an equestrian removing their horse's feces from a trail.

Most dog walkers in the area are very conscientious about cleaning up after their dogs and aggressively try to educate those who are not.

Please understand that dog walkers too, voted for the Open Space sales tax. Keep in mind that it is estimated that 50% of the homes in California keep dogs and pets. It would be a shame to alienate this constituency.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter."

20. Bob Edwards, President - Sonoma Valley Dog Owners and Guardians

Comments:

"Sonoma Valley Dog Owners and Guardians (SVDOG) is a non-profit corporation dedicated to the well-being of Dogs in Sonoma Valley. We are "A Friendly Pack of Dogs and Their People."

One of our aims is to establish and promote Sonoma Valley communities as the most Dog-Friendly anywhere. The Valley no doubt mirrors the rest of California, where fully 50% or more of households have at least one family member who is a Dog. It is estimated there are more Dogs than children in the homes of Sonoma Valley, and if so, it is a clear indication of the important place these wonderful creatures hold in the lives of so many. As more visitors from around the state and country bring their Dogs with them to enjoy our Valley, we believe it is increasingly important to welcome them by expanding the facilities, services, recreation and public access available to them and their Dogs.

Unfortunately, Dog-lovers in the Valley and elsewhere in Sonoma County often find that Dogs are unreasonably excluded – by government fiat - from public spaces and public life. Such bans frequently stem from ill-informed or outdated attitudes about Dogs and/or ill-founded claims that Dogs are in some way harmful or annoying to a majority of humans. Thanks to better education and information about Dogs, and as more of them find their way into our homes and hearts, those attitudes and claims seldom stand up to objective scrutiny. The Dog-Friendly, up-scale community and tourist destination

of Carmel in Monterey County is an example of the joy and enlightenment that should exist elsewhere regarding the place and importance of Dogs in modern society.

With areas like Carmel in mind, SVDOG finds the anti-Dog policy of the Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District particularly unreasonable and ironic. Like others in our Valley, many if not most Dog owners have gladly supported tax measures that enable the District to acquire and preserve the natural and rural character of our communities and surrounding environment. It is therefore difficult for us to accept that with each new announced swath of countryside saved with our tax dollars, we in Sonoma County are, in effect, told, "Thanks for your money, but No Dogs Allowed."

The announced 4-mile trail linking Jacobs Ranch on Sonoma Mountain Road with Jack London State Park is but the latest example. We are told that "per District policy prohibiting dogs on Open Space Preserve lands" Dogs will not be permitted on the trail corridor. That policy was cited earlier in banning people with Dogs from the 98 acres of newly acquired open space adjacent to the City of Sonoma.

While we understand there are a few public spaces from which Dogs should be restricted, SVDOG believes that any policy imposing a blanket restriction on Dogs in District open space is outdated, discriminatory, unjustified and unacceptable in this day and age. The credibility of claims and fears that Dogs somehow pose a particular threat to the peace or purpose of Open Space clearly suffers when access to these public spaces is granted to unlimited numbers of people on mountain bikes and on horseback.

The no-Dogs policy is incongruous in light of the General Manager's Message on the Distric websitesite asserting that "(s)eventy-five percent of (voters) strongly want the District to continue its important acquisition work, protecting farms and ranches, natural areas, greenbelts around cities, scenic hillsides and *lands for recreation*." (emphasis added). Walking with a Dog on or off-leash is a simple, popular, inexpensive, innocent, peaceful and healthy form of recreation and pleasure for both Dogs and people. Unlike off-road bicyclingling or horseback-riding, it is also a form of recreation enjoyed by and accessible to people within a wide range of ages, incomes and physical abilities/disabilities.

We fully understand excluding truly destructive or dangerous recreation from District open space and trails; dirt bikes, hunting and ATV's come to mind. Yet if the real purpose of the District is to preserve land for recreation and enjoyment of a wide range of people and not just a select few, walking with Dogs should not be lumped together with those activities. Indeed, in neighboring Marin County as well as in the GGNRA, people enjoying the public lands, beaches and trails in the company of Dogs have been a familiar, harmless and welcome part of the outdoor experience for generations. The access Dog owners seek in Sonoma County is thus neither unreasonable or ground-breaking.

We are encouraged that the General Manager's Message on the District's websitesite announces that "(w)e are engaged in a process to develop a Strategic Plan that will guide the District's future work. We welcome your comments." But SVDOG believes that any truly responsive planning process must include more than perfunctorily receiving comments. The public (including Dog owners and groups) should have an active seat at the table and, at a minimum, the discussion should include a complete examination and overhaul of the District's anti-Dog policy.

SVDOG is eager to participate constructively in any process that creates a new, more Dog-Friendly and respectful concept of “Open Space.” May we please hear from you soon as to when such a policy review might be undertaken, and whether we and others who love and understand Dogs will be invited to participate?”

21. Mary Ellen Oertel and Raymond Masnack - Dog Owners – via email

Comments:

“We are in favor of allowing dogs on Sonoma county open space areas. We oppose banning dogs from any open space land.”

11/12/07

22. Gwyn Williams-Stanton

Comments:

“I am appealing to you to allow responsible dog owners to participate in walking open space trails. Please understand that dog walkers voted for the Open Space sales tax. It is estimated that 50% of the homes in California keep dogs and pets. It would be a shame to alienate this constituency.

Most dog walkers in the area are very conscientious about cleaning up after their dogs and aggressively try to educate those who are not. It is important to us that we also have access to open space trails with our animals (on leash). Horses and bikes are allowed on these trails. Responsible dog owners should also be allowed.

Thank you for your time.”

23. Victor Reus M.D. – Dog owner – via email

Comments:

“Please allow dogs on leash to travel on the designated trail corridor on Sonoma Mountain. Dog owners represent fifty percent of taxpayors in California and it is unfair to systematically exclude those of us who wish to responsibly enjoy these lands as much as the horseowners and mountain bike riders, who, I understand, will be allowed to continue their activities. I and my wife have lived on Sonoma Mt. for 20 years and wish to protect this resource as much as anyone could; there is no reason we cannot all use these lands together in a cooperative manner without unwarrented coercive regulation. Thank you.”

11/15/07

24. Mary Poe - Summit View Ranch homeowner – via email.

Comment:

My name is Mary Poe and I am writing you regarding the Sonoma Mountain Trail project on Jacob's Ranch on behalf of the Homeowner's Association of Summit View Ranch, the project's border on the west.

I really enjoyed reading the draft/initial study and found that most of our resident's questions were answered therein. However, since the entrance road to the staging area is virtually on the border between our two properties we naturally have some concerns regarding potential trespass onto Summit View Ranch. We are pleased to know that the staging area access will be managed by the Regional Parks and that the opening hours will be dawn to dusk, only. But here are a couple of questions...Are there plans for a locked gate at the entrance somewhere near Sonoma Mountain Rd. to prevent access to

the staging area after hours, or is that not possible because of the residences that will need to be accessed? How have you handled this type of issue previously? Will you be able to work with us to post private property/no trespassing signs along the border between our 2 properties?

I am looking forward to watching the progress of the project and hiking or riding to Jack London in the near future. What a great resource to have next door. My husband and I were original volunteers on the Jacob's Ranch and enjoyed several hikes on the property.

Would it be possible for you to notify me of any future public meetings on the project as I would love to attend and other ranch residents may as well?

I would look forward to talking to you regarding the questions our residents have regarding the project."

25. Helen Bates, Chair of Sonoma Mountain Preservation

Comments:

"Sonoma Mountain Preservation (SMP) supports the North Slope Sonoma Mountain Ridge Trail Project and OSD's intention to adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration in accordance with CEQA.

SMP was founded in 1993 with the mission to:

- preserve the scenic, agricultural, and natural resources of Sonoma Mountain
- expand recreational opportunities on Sonoma Mountain
- provide a forum for constructive discussion of issues related to Sonoma Mountain
- represent the interests of SMP before public and private agencies

This project, to create a 4.25 mile trail connecting Jack London State Park on the east, with Jacobs Ranch on the west, is a wonderful fulfillment of SMP goals and it has our full support!"

26. Craig S. Harrison – President – Bennett Valley Homeowners Association – via email

Comments:

"On behalf of the Bennett Valley Homeowners Association (BVHA), thank you for your presentation last night concerning the proposal to develop a hiking trail from Jacobs Ranch to Jack London State Historical Park. The BVHA was established in 1970 and is dedicated to promoting and preserving the rural, residential character and natural environment of Bennett Valley. The BVHA is enthusiastic about the proposed trail and strongly supports increased opportunities for residents of our area to enjoy the many public parks that surround us. Ironically, few Bennett Valley residents have easy access to the parks adjacent to us, and many drive thirty minutes or more for hiking opportunities. This situation needlessly adds to traffic congestion and pollution. As planning and construction of the trail proceeds, we request that the District maximize opportunities for dog owners to hike the trail with dogs on leashes. We also request that you work with the Board of Supervisors and County Transportation Department to ensure that the roads that provide access to the trailhead on Sonoma Mountain Road are properly maintained. The additional traffic going to and from the trailhead may

exacerbate some of the maintenance problems that we have been experiencing. Thank you for your proposal, and we look forward to working with you as the project is implemented."

27. Marilee Jensen,

Comments:

"Thank you very much for your interesting presentation last night at the Bennett Valley omeowner's meeting. I am the editor of the VOICE, the BVHA newsletter, but I am no longer on the BVHA Board, by choice. (Too many other things to do.) Nevertheless, I wanted to let you know that I also completely support all the work you've done and the plans you have for this North Slope Sonoma Mountain Ridge Trail Project.

I do want to encourage you to allow dogs on this trail, up to the State Parks connections. You can have a sign located at those points, saying that dogs are not allowed to go any further. Every summer I go up to our cabin in the Sierras, where my dog loves to go hiking with me. Last summer we went on a two-day back pack trip through a Eldorado National Forest Wilderness area. I phoned the district ranger's office in advance to be sure dogs were allowed and was told that dogs are allowed in that area as long as they are on a leash or under voice control. We had a wonderful two-day hike. Overnight is not applicable to this North Slope trail project, but I wanted to be sure you knew that the Federal Government apparently has determined that dogs under control are not damaging to the environment or to the wildlife. With dogs allowed on this new North Slope trail, it will encourage a lot more local people to enjoy these lovely splendors. As a part of this, it would be especially useful to have the trail through Cooper's Grove included as part of a round-trip trail not going into the State Park land, including the Fairfield-Osborne Preserve. Thanks again."

28. Craig Harrison – Volunteer Patroller for Jacobs Ranch

Comments:

"Thank you for the opportunity to review the draft Initial Study for North Slope Sonoma Mountain Ride Trail Project ("Trail Proposal"). We live within half a mile of the project and can see the upper ranch house on Jacobs Ranch from our kitchen window. We are members of the Jacobs Ranch Patrol and are very excited about having the trail completed as soon as possible. We have comments on several aspects of the Trail Proposal.

1. **Policy to Exclude Leashed Dogs From the Trail.**

We were surprised and disappointed to read on page 14 that "per District policy prohibiting dogs on Open Space Preserve lands, dogs would not be permitted on the trail corridor." While we have no objection to trail bikes and horses sharing the trail with hikers (provided they behave within the rules), it seems arbitrary and capricious to exclude dogs on leashes for a trail that is designed to meet "multi-use standards" (p. 3). We do not want this issue to interfere with building the trail, but we think that it is unwise and unfair and should be reconsidered. We walk our dogs on many of the trails in the Sonoma County Regional Parks and, except for Shiloh Ranch Regional Park, leashed dogs are allowed on all trails. One reason that we have been excited about opening this trail is that it would allow us to hike with our dogs without getting into our car at all, or hike after a very short drive. We live surrounded by public lands in Bennett Valley, yet we often have to drive a half hour or more to hike with our dogs.

We cannot understand how allowing dogs would undermine either the open space or the agricultural objectives of the District. We also do not believe that dogs would have any significant effect on wildlife. Many allegations made against dogs in public parks seem to be accepted without any scientific confirmation. The evidence that local wildlife is not seriously affected by detecting dog scents on trails is strong. Local residents with dogs in the surrounding Sonoma Mountain neighborhood frequently report these same wild creatures (coyote, fox, bobcat, deer, raccoon, mountain lion, skunks, quail, etc) denning, nesting, or just prowling on their property. Human teenagers, children, and park construction and maintenance staff with their machinery and vehicles would have greater impact on wildlife than leashed dogs. Our 5-acre parcel harbors much of the same wildlife as the trail corridor (indeed, in some cases we may share the same individual creatures). Our dogs run free on our property, and the only mammals that they encounter during daylight hours are gray squirrels, jack rabbits and black-tailed deer.

Except for a few gophers and mice, our dogs have never caught anything. Squirrels, rabbits and deer escape with ease, and on leashes they pose much less of a threat. At night raccoons, possums, gray fox, striped skunks, coyotes, puma and bobcats have been active on our property and do not seem to be disturbed by the presence of our dogs in our home or on our deck.

If the real concern is irresponsible owners who will allow their dogs to run off-leash, we propose an education effort, similar to the education you propose for horse owners and bike riders. (Stated by Kim Batchelder during November 14, 2007, Bennett Valley Homeowners' Association meeting.) No dog owner wants encounters with wild animals, including rattlesnakes, because they can inflict severe injury or death to dogs. Puma have killed cattle, calves and sheep (always at night) within half a mile of our home during the past two years. We know of an instance a few years ago at Crane Creek Park where a hiker posted signs around the park advising people not to let their dogs off leash because her unleashed dog was killed by a buck deer. There are credible reports that raccoons can kill dogs. Local dog owners know this. We believe if dog owners who do not live in this area were advised of these facts at the trailheads that they would be reluctant to unleash their dogs.

Additionally, educating dog owners of the damage loose running animals can create on sensitive habitat would help them to understand the need to keep their animals on-leash. Policies prohibiting dogs unfairly punish the vast majority of responsible dog owners, for the defiant or careless acts of a handful. For the more defiant ones, education should be followed by some stern language concerning the consequences of non-compliance, such as fines or a loss of access rights. The volunteer patrol and recruiting local dog owners who are motivated to make dog access work, could help monitor the situation and educate fellow dog owners.

With regard to cleaning up feces, we note that when we visited Jacobs Ranch just a few days ago the roads contained quote a bit of scat from what seems to be coyotes, gray fox, raccoons and turkeys (turkeys have recently become abundant in our area and if not checked soon will become pests). Signs at the trailheads should remind dog owners that Sonoma County Ordinance 5-115 requires that they clean up after their animals throughout the county, and disposable dog bags should be placed there. The more opportunities that exist to walk dogs on trails, the less concentrated such activities will be and the less chance that there will be annoying amounts of dog feces on any trail. We note that so far as we know, no one asks horse owners to clean up after their animals.

We understand that, other than near the trailhead, there are no plans for human toilets along the trail. This means that planners have accepted the possibility of human feces deposits along or near the trail. It is difficult for us to understand why the possibility of a few piles of dog scat, unretrieved by a handful of non-compliant dog owners is a reason to disallow dogs, but giant piles of horse droppings and human feces is acceptable.

We recognize that some people will not obey laws and rules, however reasonable. We walk Sonoma Mountain Road regularly and frequently remove beer bottles, soda cans, Starbuck's coffee cups, etc. that were tossed along the roadside. Littering violates county ordinances, and drinking alcohol while driving is a serious violation of state law. One of the more annoying things we learned after moving to this area has been the frequency with which non-residents deposit old sofas, televisions and sundry large garbage along our rural roads. Illicit marijuana patches are found growing in many areas of northern California, and could happen on District land using access from the hiking trail. We do not believe that any of these illegal activities justify over-reaction by denying law-abiding people the opportunity to use public resources in our area. The issue of security and possible illegal activities deep in the parcels that are accessible by the trail is an excellent reason to allow individuals to be accompanied by their dogs. More people will walk the trail, and the dogs would act as a deterrent to violations of the laws and rules.

The Open Space Element of the Sonoma County General Plan (OS-7) states:

> Establish a countywide park and trail system which meets future recreational needs of the county's residents while protecting agricultural uses. The emphasis of the trail system should be near urban areas and on public lands.

This broad mandate does not contemplate arbitrarily restricting trail access by excluding a large portion of the community that desires the opportunity to use open space trails. According to staff at the Sonoma County Animal Shelter, there are about 130,000 dogs licensed in Sonoma County, which reside in about half of Sonoma County households. Our informal survey indicates that dog ownership is even more prevalent in rural areas such as Bennett Valley. In addition to our personal interest in this issue, we are concerned that if the district is perceived as anti-dog in its policies it may find diminished support for its programs in the larger community. This would be very unfortunate.

One of the primary purposes of this trail project is to open areas and create a trail for public recreation. Denying access to a very large population of potential recreational users is not consistent with the fulfillment of this purpose. Dogs and their owners should be treated as a client group, and an integral part of the decision-making process, rather than as a problem that needs to be solved. The needs of all users of open space should be impartially taken into account. Dog owners deserve access to public open spaces to the same extent as hikers, equestrians and mountain bike riders. Equestrians and trail bikes are more likely than dogs to cause trail damage (e.g., erosion and the spread of invasive plants).

Is one group more worthy of access merely because the issues were easier to resolve, and another group is denied access because it would require a bit more planning or creative thought? If planners are willing to consider the specific needs and issues surrounding the presence of horses on trails, going so far as to offer specific parking facilities catering to horses, why it is beyond the Open Space District planning scope to

find ways to accommodate the much larger constituency of dog owners? What is the cost to build special parking facilities for horse trailers vs. creating signs and/or flyers and a few rolls of doggie bags?

We understand that the Jack London Historical State Park and Fairfield Osborne Preserve do not allow dogs on their trails. We do not believe that this is a good reason for the District to adopt the same policy. Indeed, this seems an opportunity to persuade the state park to change its policies, at least with respect to the portion of its trail system that connects with the proposed trail. The Trail Proposal is unclear as to whether it will include portions of Fairfield Osborn Preserve. If dogs are not allowed there, and if the preserve's mission is to protect and restore natural communities, the wiser course seems to avoid having the trail alignment go through that area at all because horses, mountain bikes, and humans will from time to time disturb that area.

In any event, even if the state park or Fairfield Osborne Preserve were not to allow dogs on leashes, this is no good reason to forbid them on the lower parts of the trail that are not within their jurisdiction. Many people would be content to use the portions of the trail accessible from Jacobs Ranch, without hiking its entire 4.25 mile length to the state park and then another 6 miles to the trailhead on the other side. Closing the entire trail to dogs merely because the upper portion poses problems seems an extreme reaction that is not justified.

Finally, a policy of restricting dog access to more urban parks is essentially saying that dogs and their owners are not allowed the same rights and access as other client groups. Parks for dogs are often offered as a concession, in the least attractive, leftover, and often most urban spaces. We want to walk with our dogs on rural trails, not take them to dog concentration camps.

2. **Condition of Roads Near the Project.**

Residents of our area have been attempting to persuade the Sonoma County Public Works Department to better maintain Pressley Road and Sonoma Mountain Road for some time. During the past few winters pot holes have been so bad that residents have painted white circles around them and have even placed cones inside the large ones. Supervisor Tim Smith was quoted in the September 18th edition of the Press Democrat as saying "We may have to look our rural residents in the face and say we are not going to take care of their roads." While your estimates of increased vehicle travel related to this project do not seem to greatly increase traffic in our area, opening this trail is one more reason that the County should not allow Pressley Road and Sonoma Mountain Road to become pot-holed third world roads. We hope that the Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District will raise the issue of the sorry condition of our roads with the Board of Supervisors and the County Transportation Department.

3. Project Schedule.

The Proposed Trail seems to be implemented in three phases. We hope that each phase would be open to the public once it is completed. It seems unnecessary to wait until every part of the 4.25- mile trail is completed before opening its lower reaches.

4. Mitigation Measures.

The Trail Proposal can be implemented without damage to the existing environment. We believe that allowing leashed dogs, provided there is appropriate signage at the trail heads, would not raise any additional issues for mitigation under the California Environmental Quality Act that have not been already covered in the Trail Proposal.

Protecting watersheds and stream crossings seems to be the most important environmental consideration. We believe that the South Fork of Matanzas Creek is the most important wildlife corridor in this area. We are conscious of the costs of excessive mitigation to the District, which ultimately will limit the number of trails that the District can build in Sonoma County. In this regard, Mitigation Measure IV-1 (pp. 87-88) seems to be extreme. It may be expensive to the District to relocate the trail 100 feet from trees that harbor bird nests during the spring and summer. This is not required by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Had this statute, enacted in 1918, been interpreted and implemented as recommended in the Trail Proposal, most logging and farming activities during the past century would have violated the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. This mitigation measure makes sense for endangered species (e.g., spotted owls) and for fairly rare birds such as great horned owls, red-shouldered hawks and white-tailed kites. It makes no sense for the birds that are common around homes in Bennett Valley -- scrub jays, Steller's jays, oak titmouse, lesser goldfinch, brown towhees, acorn woodpeckers and many others. Finally, mitigation measures for cultural resources seem similarly excessive and could be pared back. As one example, Mitigation Measure V-2 defines anything 45 years or older as "historic materials." Thus a Pabst Blue Ribbon beer bottle or a "Meet the Beatles" album from 1963 are deemed to be historic. This is the type of thing that makes government agencies the object of public derision.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our comments and concerns, and we look forward to working with the District in many other projects in our area."

Sincerely,
/s/ *Craig S. Harrison*
/s/ *Marina. Harrison*
Craig and Marina Harrison

11/16/07

29. Karl Keener – dog owner – via email

Comments:

"As a resident of Sonoma County and the owner of a very loyal canine companion, I write to protest that portion of the Draft Initial Study/Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration: North Slope Sonoma Mountain Ridge Trail Project wherein it is once again proposed to prohibit dogs on Open Space Preserve lands.

Surely this study does not mean to suggest that equestrian and dirt bike traffic is less intrusive or more environmentally suitable for the preservation of our Open Space lands. It was recently reported in one of our local newspapers that more families in Sonoma County have dogs than children. I wonder how many of those dog owning families pay taxes to support the Open Space District and voted in favor of the tax extension. I also wonder how many of those voters are aware there is a policy in this county to discriminate against their dogs. Specifically I have reference to the following admission that appears on Page 14 of the Draft Initial Study:

"…As per District policy prohibiting dogs on Open Space Preserve lands, dogs would not be permitted on the trail corridor."

A policy to openly discriminate against Man's Best Friend is unfortunate and ill advised. I encourage you to change this policy."

30. Julie Watson– dog owner – via email

Comments:

"I am writing to object to the banning of dogs from all Sonoma trails. I am a frequent visit to Sonoma and have always enjoyed its dog-friendly accomodation and recreation, including hiking. If i can't bring my dog then i will opt to go where i can."

RESPONSES TO ORAL AND EMAIL COMMENTS

1. See Response 3.2.

2. See Response 3.2.

3. See Response 3.2.

4. See Response 3.2 regarding prohibition of dogs on the trail. The impact of the proposed project on biological resources is discussed in IV. Biological Resources of the Draft IS/MND, which identifies mitigation measures that would reduce all potential impacts on biological resources to a less than significant level.

5. See Response 3.2.

6. See Response 3.2.

7. See Response 3.2.

8. See Response 3.2.

9. See Response 3.2.

10. See Response 3.2.

11. See Response 3.2.

12. See Response 3.2.

13. Horse rental and riding facilities are not proposed as part of the project (see 9. Description of Project, pages 2-16 of the Draft IS/MND).

    As stated on page 14 of the Draft IS/MND, map restrictions on the Sonoma Mountain Woodlands property prohibit the use of mountain bikes. There are limited options for bypassing this section by cyclists. Because alternatives to allow multiple user groups to use the proposed trail would be explored and could be implemented, the Draft IS/MND evaluated the potential use of mountain bikes on the entire trail, including the Sonoma Mountain Woodlands property. At the time this Response to Comments document was prepared, no such alternative had been identified.

14. See Response 3.2.

15. See Response 3.2.

16. See Response 3.2.

17. See Response 3.2.

18. See Response 3.2.

19. See Response 3.2.

20. See Response 3.2.

21. See Response 3.2.

22. See Response 3.2.

23. See Response 3.2.

24. Regarding the question about a locked gate at the entrance somewhere near Sonoma Mountain Road, the District plans to install a gate that will prevent the general public from entering the access road after hours.

    Regarding the question about posting private property/no trespassing signs, the District intends to work with the commenter to locate specific signs to ensure that the general public is aware that no trespassing shall occur on private lands. The District intends to sign all access points, trailheads and trails so that people do not wander off this corridor.

25. Comment noted. No response is required.

26. See Response 3.2 regarding prohibition of dogs on the trail.

    Regarding the comment on road maintenance, the issue of adequacy of existing levels of road maintenance is a pre-existing condition that does not pertain to the environmental impacts of the proposed project. As discussed in XV. Transportation/Traffic, on pages 74-83 of the Draft IS/MND, the proposed project would generate a relatively small amount of additional vehicle traffic, which would have a less than significant impact on local traffic conditions. For similar reasons, project-generated traffic would have a less than significant impact on existing conditions and maintenance requirements.

27. See Response 3.2.

28. Regarding the comment on prohibition of dogs, see Response 3.2.

    Regarding the comment "*The Trail Proposal is unclear as to whether it will include portions of Fairfield Osborn Preserve.*", Item 9. Description of Project, on page 3 of the Draft IS/MND, states "*The proposed project includes two alternative trail alignments (see Introduction and Overview, below). One of these alignments would pass between the Wilroth and Skiles Ranch properties via a small portion of a seventh property owned by Sonoma State University. This property (APN 136-201-048) is unimproved, forms part of the Fairfield Osborn Preserve…*"

    Regarding the comment on the condition of nearby roads, the issue of adequacy of existing levels of road maintenance is a pre-existing condition that does not pertain to the proposed project. As discussed in XV. Transportation/Traffic, on pages 74-83 of the Draft IS/MND, the proposed project would generate a relatively small amount of additional vehicle traffic, which would have a less than significant impact on local

traffic conditions. For similar reasons, project-generated traffic would have a less than significant impact on existing conditions and maintenance requirements.

The comment on the project schedule does not pertain to the environmental impacts of the proposed project.

Regarding the comment under the heading Mitigation Measures on the subject of allowing dogs, see Response 3.2.

Regarding the comment under the heading Mitigation Measures on the subject of Mitigation Measure IV-1, the Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA, 16 U.S.C., Sec. 703, Supp I) prohibits any person to:

> *"pursue, hunt, take, capture, kill, attempt to take, capture or kill, possess, offer for sale, sell, offer to purchase, purchase, deliver for shipment, ship, cause to be shipped, deliver for transportation, transport, cause to be transported, carry, or cause to be carried by any means whatever, receive for shipment, transportation or carriage, or export, at any time, or in any manner, any migratory bird, included in the terms of this Convention ... for the protection of migratory birds ... or any part, nest, or egg of any such bird."*[1]

The list of migratory birds includes almost every native bird in the United States, including those birds that are considered common residents but are known to migrate elsewhere during the winter. This law extends to parts of birds, nests, and eggs. It is therefore a violation of the MBTA to directly kill or destroy an active nest of any bird species. The MBTA is typically applied on domestic projects to prevent injury or death of nesting birds and their chicks. For these reasons, Mitigation Measure IV-1 is necessary and appropriate as written.

Regarding the comment under the heading Mitigation Measures on the subject of Mitigation Measure V-2, the definition of historic materials in the mitigation measure is based on currently accepted standards for historic materials. Thus, Mitigation Measure V-2 is appropriate as written.

29. See Response 3.2.

30. See Response 3.2.

[1] Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 (16 U.S.C. 703-712; Ch. 128; July 13,1918; 40 Stat. 755) as amended by Chapter 634; June 20,1936; 49 Stat. 1556; P.L. 86-732; September 8, 1960; 74 Stat. 866; P.L. 90-578; October 17,1968; 82 Stat. 1118; P.L. 91-135; December 5,1969; 83 Stat. 282; P.L. 93-300; June 1,1974; 88 Stat. 190; P.L. 95-616; November 8, 1978; 92 Stat. 3111; P.L. 99-645; November 10,1986; 100 Stat. 3590 and P.L. 105-312; October30, 1998; 112 Stat. 2956.

SECTION 4
REVISIONS TO DRAFT INITIAL STUDY/MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

This section summarizes revisions to the Draft IS/MND that were made due to staff-initiated text changes and in response to the comments above.

STAFF-INITIATED TEXT CHANGES

In the course of preparing responses to comments on the Draft IS/MND, staff identified revisions to the text and/or figures of the Draft IS/MND. The revisions reflect corrections to Mitigation Measures IV-4 and IV-6 in the Draft IS/MND. Staff-initiated text changes are identified below.

Mitigation Measure IV-4 on pages 39-40 and 89-90 of the Draft IS/MND is revised as follows (additions underlined, deletions shown in ~~strikethrough~~):

Mitigation Measure IV-4:

For the removal of any tree protected by the Sonoma County Tree Protection Ordinance that is larger than 9 inches DBH, compensatory tree replacement shall occur at a 2:1 ratio (tree removed: tree replaced).

- *Establish a reforestation site along the western border of forest in Jacobs Ranch. 100 fifteen-gallon trees shall be planted at this site to mitigate for the 46 trees that would be removed.*

- *Species selected for reforestation shall be resistant to Sudden Oak Death (SOD), caused by the pathogen* Phytophthora ramorum. *To the extent possible, the species of replacement trees shall correspond to the trees removed.*[2]

- *Replacement trees shall be planted between November and January with nursery stock from local sources familiar with the soil types of Sonoma County. Spacing of the plants shall be nine feet~~inches~~ by nine feet~~inches~~ to allow the trees adequate space to grow without competition for light or nutrients. Herbaceous material around the seedlings shall be cleared during the first three years after the plants have been planted. The trees shall be irrigated for three years and protected from browsing herbivores such as deer and cattle for the first three to five years using protective sleeves and fencing. Once the seedlings have reached a height of greater than five feet, the protection shall be removed.*

[2] Despite the wide host range of *P. ramorum*, oaks in the white oak sub-genus of Quercus, including blue oak (*Q. douglassii*), valley oak (*Q. lobata*), and Oregon white oak (*Q. garryana*) do not appear to be susceptible to *P. ramorum* and SOD. No species in the white oak group have been found with the disease in the field in California, Oregon, or Europe. As such, it appears that native blue oak, valley oak, and the Oregon white oak may be suitable replacement trees to compensate for the loss of individual coast live oak, black oak, madrone, or California bay laurel trees in *P. ramorum*-infested areas.

…

Mitigation Measure IV-6 on pages 40-41 and 90 of the Draft IS/MND is revised as follows (additions underlined, deletions shown in ~~strikethrough~~):

> ***Mitigation Measure IV-6:*** *If a tree needs to be removed, the tree stump shall be cut as close to the ground as practical. Stump grinding is not recommended because the roots and stump can help reduce soil erosion and eliminate the need to bring in heavy equipment ~~may become contaminated by soil and result in pathogen spread when used at another location~~. The operation of vehicles or heavy equipment in such areas may facilitate~~lead to further~~ disease spread or lead to~~when~~ soil erosion at the site~~is disturbed and moved around~~. If at all practical, tree removal shall be scheduled between June to October when conditions are warm and dry, and to avoid removing diseased trees when moist conditions favor pathogen spread — November to May. A nesting survey, as described in Mitigation Measure IV-1, shall be completed prior to tree removal if such removals are done between February 1 and August 1.*

Staff has carefully reviewed the revisions to Mitigation Measures IV-4 and IV-6, to determine if these revisions constitute a new, significant effect or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified effects, or if the proposed mitigation measures will not reduce potential effects to less than significance, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Sections 15073.5 and 15162(a). Staff concludes that these revised mitigation measures do not constitute new significant impacts or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified effects, that the substituted and revised mitigation measures are equal to or more effective than the original mitigation measures, that the proposed mitigation measures will reduce potential effects to less than significance, and that recirculation of the Draft IS/MND is not required.

REVISIONS TO DRAFT IS/MND IN RESPONSE TO COMMENTS

Revisions to the Draft IS/MND that were made in response to the comments in Sections 2 and 3 are summarized below.

Figure 1, page 5 of the Draft IS/MND is revised to label the ADA parking overlook, and add “Sonoma State University” to the Fairfield Osborn Preserve. The revised Figure 1 is shown on page 9.

The last sentence of the first paragraph on page 11 of the Draft IS/MND is revised as follows (additions underlined, deletions shown in ~~strikethrough~~):

> This trail spur would be a deadend~~one-way~~ segment (users must return to the main trail) with only minimal infrastructure at the end destination point such as hitching posts and benches.

The second sentence of the second paragraph on page 11 of the Draft IS/MND is revised as follows (additions underlined, deletions shown in ~~strikethrough~~):

> This loop trail spur would start from the southern portion of the Cooper’s Grove property, and travel north on the east side of the in-holdings as it winds downhill to the Cooper’s redwood grove, a well-developed, second growth redwood forest (see

Figure 1: Trail Corridor and Project Location, which shows the two connections of the spur and the main trail).

Mitigation Measure V-2 on pages 45-46 of the Draft IS/MND is revised as follows (additions underlined, deletions shown in ~~strikethrough~~):

> ***Mitigation Measure V-2:*** *The project sponsor (Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District) and construction contractors shall be prepared to respond appropriately if heretofore undetected archaeological resources are encountered anywhere in the project area.*
>
> *To set up and facilitate both the recommended monitoring in Mitigation Measure V-4 and the response procedure required under CEQA, a pre-construction meeting shall be arranged involving responsible project personnel, both onsite and managerial supervisory construction personnel, and the archaeological monitors. The purpose of this meeting will be to familiarize all involved parties with the provisions of this plan. Construction contractors shall be prepared to halt and/or relocate work while finds are identified, recorded, evaluated, and if warranted, mitigative activities carried out. In virtually all reasonably foreseeable circumstances, the appropriate mitigation action will be recording and removal of archaeological objects and data from the project area.*
>
> *The Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District will include a Native American monitor to participate in the pre-construction meeting. The District shall consult with the Native American Heritage Commission for any referral(s) for identify the most appropriate Native American monitor(s) to be invited.*
>
> *Supervisory and construction personnel shall therefore be made aware of the possibility of encountering archaeological materials in this sensitive zone. In this area, the most common and recognizable evidence of prehistoric archaeological resources are deposits of faunal bone (deer, other mammals, etc.), usually in a dark fine-grained soil (midden); stone flakes left from manufacturing stone tools, or the tools themselves (mortars, pestles, arrowheads and spear points); and human burials, often as dislocated bones. Historic materials older than 45 years (bottles, artifacts, trash pits, structural remains, etc.) may also have scientific and cultural significance and should be more readily identified. If during the proposed construction project any such evidence is uncovered or encountered, all excavations within 10 meters/30 feet shall be halted long enough to call in the monitoring archaeologists to assess the situation and propose appropriate measures.*

Mitigation Measure V-4 on pages 47-48 of the Draft IS/MND is revised as follows (additions underlined, deletions shown in ~~strikethrough~~):

> ***Mitigation Measure V-4:*** *All earth-disturbing activities in the vicinity of the archaeological site SON-2453 shall be monitored by a qualified archaeologist. Archaeological monitoring shall include the following, at a minimum:*
>
> *a) Timely notification prior to any excavations;*

b) Monitoring during all earth-moving or soil disturbing activities, however minor, until and unless the monitor determines that no impacts to potentially significant archaeological materials will occur;

c) Specific requirements that archaeological monitors be notified immediately if potentially significant archaeological resources are encountered anywhere in the absence of an onsite monitor;

d) Authority of the onsite archaeological monitor to halt excavations if potentially significant archaeological materials or human remains are encountered;

e) Time and space to record, photograph and map, recover, retrieve, and/or remove any significant archaeological materials during the construction process;

f) Time and funding for laboratory cleaning, cataloging, analysis, and preparation for permanent curation of significant archaeological materials after onsite monitoring ends; and

g) Time and funding for a Final Report of findings, to incorporate data developed for this report as appropriate and data developed by monitoring and analysis; additional historical and/or archival research may also be warranted. In addition to reporting to the project sponsor (Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District), copies of the Final Report must be submitted to the Northwest Information Center of the California Historical Resources Information System for inclusion in the permanent archives, and another copy shall accompany any curated archaeological materials and data. Archaeological data, reports, and recovered materials are and will remain the property of the property owners.

The Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District will invite a Native American monitor to monitor earth-disturbing activities in the vicinity of the archaeological site SON-2453. The District shall consult with the Native American Heritage Commission for any referral(s) for Native American monitor(s).

As part of the requirements of Mitigation Measure V-~~4~~2, archaeological identification, inventory, evaluation, research and mitigation under provisions of CEQA shall be completely reported in a comprehensive manner, incorporating all methods used and data gained, thorough current scientific analysis of all data, and interpretation of any archaeological resources within a regional archaeological framework. Qualified professional archaeologists shall complete the report to current professional standards, and the data shall be made available to other qualified researchers following completion of the final report. Appropriate specialized, focused scientific analytic techniques shall be applied (e.g., radiocarbon dating, obsidian sourcing and hydration, typological studies, geomorphological studies, faunal analysis, etc.). Obtaining, analyzing, interpreting, and reporting archaeological data from the project area would serve as mitigative compensation for any project-related impacts to resources.

SECTION 5
MITIGATION MONITORING AND REPORTING PROGRAM

This section presents the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) for the proposed project. The mitigation measures in the MMRP below reflect changes made in this document and summarized in Section 4.

OVERVIEW

Pursuant to Section 21081.6 of the State CEQA Guidelines[3], the mitigation measures listed in the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) are to be implemented as part of the proposed project. The MMRP identifies the time at which each mitigation measure is to be implemented and the department or individual responsible for implementation. The initials of the designated responsible person will indicate completion of their portion of the mitigation measure. The Project Coordinator or Natural Resources Planner's signature on the Certification of Compliance will indicate complete implementation of the MMRP.

The mitigation measures included in the MMRP are considered conditions of approval of the proposed project. The Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District agrees to implement the mitigation measures identified in the MMRP. Implementation of the mitigation measures included in the MMRP is expected to avoid, minimize, rectify, reduce, or compensate potentially significant impacts to a less than significant level.

TIME OF IMPLEMENTATION

Project Design: The mitigation measure will be incorporated into the project design and/or included in the project specifications and contract special provisions prior to awarding a construction project.
Pre-Construction: The mitigation measure will be implemented before construction activities begin.
Construction: The mitigation measure will be implemented during construction.
Post-Construction: The mitigation measure will be implemented after project construction.

RESPONSIBLE PERSONS AND DEPARTMENTS

The Project Coordinator and Natural Resources Planner will be responsible for the overall implementation of the MMRP. Generally, the District's Natural Resources Planner will sign off on the mitigation measures included in the MMRP. Periodically, staff of other County departments or regulatory agencies will be involved in the implementation of specific mitigation measures. In these instances, the staff, department, or agency will be identified in the MMRP.

RECORD KEEPING

[3] California Code of Regulations Title 14.

The Natural Resources Planner along with the project oversight consultant will maintain the records of the MMRP. When the MMRP is fully implemented, the original signed copy will be maintained in the official Project Binder.

Mitigation Measure	MONITORING			VERIFICATION	
	Implementation Entity	Monitoring and Verification Entity	Timing Requirements	Signature	Date
AESTHETICS					
Mitigation Measure I-1: Implement Mitigation Measures IV-4 and IV-5.	See Mitigation Measures IV-4 and IV-5	See Mitigation Measures IV-4 and IV-5	See Mitigation Measures IV-4 and IV-5		
AIR QUALITY					
Mitigation Measure III-1: The project applicant shall reduce the severity of project construction–period dust impacts by requiring implementation of the following dust control measures by contractors during construction: a) Watering should be used to control dust generation during excavation, grading, and site preparation activities. b) Cover all trucks hauling debris, soils, sand or other such material from the site or require all trucks to maintain at least two feet of freeboard. c) Use dust–proof chutes to load debris into trucks whenever feasible. d) Water all active construction areas at least twice daily. e) Water or cover all stockpiles of debris, soil, sand, or other materials that can be blown by the wind. f) Apply water three times daily, or apply (non–toxic) soil stabilizers, on all unpaved access roads, parking areas, and staging areas at construction sites. g) Sweep daily (preferably with water sweepers) all paved access roads, parking areas, and staging areas at construction sites. h) Sweep streets daily (preferably with water sweepers) if visible soil material is carried onto adjacent public streets. i) Require the project contractor(s) to maintain and operate construction equipment so as to minimize exhaust emissions of	Construction contractor	Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District	Incorporation of Procedures Into Project Plans: Project Design Implementation: Construction		

Mitigation Measure	MONITORING			VERIFICATION	
	Implementation Entity	Monitoring and Verification Entity	Timing Requirements	Signature	Date
particulates and other pollutants, by such means as prohibiting idling motors when equipment is not in use or when trucks are waiting in queues, and implementing specific maintenance programs to reduce emissions for equipment that would be in frequent use for much of the construction period. j) All vehicles and equipment shall adhere to a 15 mph speed limit on Jacobs Ranch.					
BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES					
Mitigation Measure IV-1: For scheduled construction between February 1 and August 1, a qualified biologist shall conduct a pre-construction survey to determine if nesting is occurring in trees along the alignment of the trail section to be constructed. The survey shall occur within 14 days prior to the initiation of trail construction activities during the early part of the breeding season (February through April) and no more than 30 days prior to the initiation of these activities during the later part of the breeding season (May through August). An active nest would be indicated by one or more of the following: a) Incubation behavior of adults (e.g., regular periods of "disappearance" into the same location followed by short, secretive flights to forage) b) Extreme distress and alarm calls when in close vicinity of the nest tree c) Observation of food being carried on the beak or claws to the nest If the nests or nesting behavior are observed, the proposed trail	Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District	California Department of Fish and Game	Pre-Construction: Within 14 days prior to the initiation of tree removal during February through April, and no more than 30 days prior to the initiation of these activities during May through August		

Mitigation Measure	MONITORING			VERIFICATION	
	Implementation Entity	Monitoring and Verification Entity	Timing Requirements	Signature	Date
alignment shall be located at least 100 feet from the nest tree and the following measures shall be implemented to protect the nest site: a) Establishment of a buffer using flagging or staking around the tree in accordance with CDFG recommendations until the young have fledged. The nest tree shall be monitored a minimum of once per week to confirm that the young have fledged and that no new nesting pairs are present before the buffer is removed. b) If it is not feasible to delay or modify construction activities around the tree, the CDFG shall be contacted to discuss alternative buffer options. If construction is planned between August 1 and February 1 trail construction could proceed as scheduled.					
Mitigation Measure IV-2: Prior to creek crossing construction, the project applicant shall contact the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the California Department of Fish and Game to determine if this activity requires either a "Permit for Discharges of Dredged/Fill Material into Waters of the U.S." from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) pursuant to Clean Water Act, Section 404, or a "Streambed Alteration Agreement" from the California Department of Fish and Game (Department) pursuant to Section 1601-1603 of the State Fish and Game Code. The approval or permit conditions from either or both of these agencies shall be incorporated into the project plans. At a minimum, the following conditions are typically incorporated into such plans: • Work within the creek corridor shall be confined to the period	Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, California Department of Fish and Game	Permits: Pre-Construction Monitoring of Permit Conditions: Construction		

Mitigation Measure	MONITORING			VERIFICATION	
	Implementation Entity	Monitoring and Verification Entity	Timing Requirements	Signature	Date
April 15 to October 15. Revegetation work would not necessarily be confined to this period. • No heavy equipment shall operate in the creek where there is water. • Any equipment or vehicles crossing the creek, or operating adjacent to the creek channel or wetlands, shall be cleaned of all external oil, grease, and materials that, if introduced to water, could be deleterious top aquatic life, wildlife or riparian habitat. • Any equipment or vehicles crossing drainages, permitted for traffic crossings, or operating adjacent to the creek channel or wetlands, shall be checked and maintained daily to prevent leaks of material that, if introduced to water, could be deleterious to aquatic life, wildlife or riparian habitat. • The trail construction contractor shall take whatever precautions are necessary to minimize the discharge of fine sediment from the work site to the waters of the US or State, including the use of silt and debris fencing to catch sediment, spreading overburden, and seeding with native grass and other seeds. • Adequate erosion and siltation control measures shall be used to prevent turbid or silt-laden water from entering the tributary creek or drainage ways to the creek. All erosion controls shall be in place prior to commencement of work and shall be maintained for the duration of project construction. • The limits of the work site and all environmentally sensitive areas shall be marked to prevent equipment and worker access.					

Mitigation Measure	MONITORING			VERIFICATION	
	Implementation Entity	Monitoring and Verification Entity	Timing Requirements	Signature	Date
• Bridge building materials and/or construction equipment shall not be stockpiled or stored where they could be washed into the water or where they will cover aquatic or riparian vegetation. • Debris, soil, silt, bark, rubbish, creosote-treated wood, raw cement/concrete or washings thereof, asphalt, paint or other coating material, oil or other petroleum products, or any other substances which could be hazardous to aquatic life, resulting from project related activities, shall be prevented from contaminating the soil and/or entering the waters of the state. Any of these materials, placed within or where they may enter the creek, by Operator or any party working under contract, or with the permission of the Operator, shall be removed immediately. • During construction, the contractor shall not dump any litter or construction debris within the riparian creek zone. All such debris and waste shall be picked up daily and properly disposed of at an appropriate site. • If, in the opinion of the Corps or Department, conditions arise, or change, in such a manner as to be considered deleterious to the stream or wildlife, operations shall cease until corrective measures approved by the Corps or Department are taken. The above conditions would be finalized by the US Army Corps of Engineers or Department of Fish and Game subsequent to the approval of permit or agreement applications.					
Mitigation Measure IV-3: The new trail alignment shall, to the maximum extent possible, utilize existing disturbed areas, clearings, and roads for trails, and the trail contractor shall adhere to the District's wildlife-friendly fencing standard and install, as required for property-line fencing, fencing designed to allow the movement of terrestrial wildlife. The lower portion of fences shall have a mesh size that allows smaller mammals such as black tailed	Construction contractor	Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District	Trail Alignment: Pre-Construction Fencing Standards: Construction		

Mitigation Measure	MONITORING			VERIFICATION	
	Implementation Entity	Monitoring and Verification Entity	Timing Requirements	Signature	Date
hare, skunk, and opossum to easily pass through but resists feral pig movement from any property into the trail corridor.					
Mitigation Measure IV-4: For the removal of any tree protected by the Sonoma County Tree Protection Ordinance that is larger than 9 inches DBH, compensatory tree replacement shall occur at a 2:1 ratio (tree removed: tree replaced). • Establish a reforestation site along the western border of forest in Jacobs Ranch. 100 fifteen-gallon trees shall be planted at this site to mitigate for the 46 trees that would be removed. • Species selected for reforestation shall be resistant to Sudden Oak Death (SOD), caused by the pathogen *Phytophthora ramorum*. To the extent possible, the species of replacement trees shall correspond to the trees removed.[4] • Replacement trees shall be planted between November and January with nursery stock from local sources familiar with the soil types of Sonoma County. Spacing of the plants shall be nine feet by nine feet to allow the trees adequate space to grow without competition for light or nutrients. Herbaceous material around the seedlings shall be cleared during the first three years after the plans have been planted. The trees shall be irrigated for three years and protected from browsing herbivores such as deer and cattle for the first three to five years using protective sleeves and fencing. Once the seedlings have	Construction Contractor	Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District	Establishment of Reforestation Site: Construction		

[4] Despite the wide host range of *P. ramorum*, oaks in the white oak sub-genus of Quercus, including blue oak (*Q. douglassii*), valley oak (*Q. lobata*), and Oregon white oak (*Q. garryana*) do not appear to be susceptible to *P. ramorum* and SOD. No species in the white oak group have been found with the disease in the field in California, Oregon, or Europe. As such, it appears that native blue oak, valley oak, and the Oregon white oak may be suitable replacement trees to compensate for the loss of individual coast live oak, black oak, madrone, or California bay laurel trees in *P. ramorum*-infested areas.

Mitigation Measure	MONITORING			VERIFICATION	
	Implementation Entity	Monitoring and Verification Entity	Timing Requirements	Signature	Date
reached a height of greater than five feet, the protection shall be removed. • Annual monitoring of the planted trees shall be conducted for five years from the time of planting. Monitoring reports shall be submitted annually to the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District.	Sonoma County Regional Parks Department	Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District	Monitoring: Post-Construction: Annually for five years		
Mitigation Measure IV-5: To protect existing trees during trail construction, the following mitigation measures shall be implemented: • No activities that might cause damage to the root systems by earth-moving equipment shall be allowed. • Temporary flagging or staking shall be placed around those trees that are near the trail but not proposed for limb removal. The temporary flagging or staking shall be installed at a distance equal to one-half of the canopy radius measured outward from the edge of the dripline. No disturbance, including grading, placement of fill material, storage of equipment, etc. shall occur within the designated protective zone for the duration of the project.	Construction Contractor	Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District	Incorporation of Procedures Into Project Plans: Project Design Implementation: Construction		
Mitigation Measure IV-6: If a tree needs to be removed, the tree stump shall be cut as close to the ground as practical. Stump grinding is not recommended because the roots and stump can help reduce soil erosion and eliminate the need to bring in heavy equipment. The operation of vehicles or heavy equipment in such areas may facilitate disease spread or lead to soil erosion at the site. If at all practical, tree removal shall be scheduled between June to October when conditions are warm and dry, and to avoid removing diseased trees when moist conditions favor pathogen spread — November to May. A nesting survey, as described in Mitigation Measure IV-1, shall be completed prior to tree removal if such removals are done between February 1 and August 1.	Construction Contractor	Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District	Incorporation of Procedures Into Project Plans: Project Design Tree Removal: June to October (Construction) Nesting Survey: See Mitigation Measure IV-1		

Mitigation Measure	MONITORING			VERIFICATION	
	Implementation Entity	Monitoring and Verification Entity	Timing Requirements	Signature	Date
Mitigation Measure IV-7: Whenever possible, the tree debris shall be left on site in a safe area where large woody debris will not move, endanger the public, contaminate uninfected hosts, or constitute a fire hazard. When infected oaks are cut down and left on site, branches shall be chipped and larger wood pieces cut and split. Woodpiles shall be stacked in sunny locations to promote rapid drying. Firewood and chips shall not be left in an area where they might be transported to another location (e.g. trailside, parking areas, etc.). Proper disposal of infested material is an effective means of limiting pathogen spread. In infested areas, leaving P. ramorum-infected or dead trees on site has not been shown to increase the risk of infection to adjacent trees. Removal from a property is only recommended if it is the first infected tree to be detected in the area, or the fire risk is high, or if the dead tree is a safety hazard. If debris cannot be left on site, infested material shall be disposed of at an approved and permitted dump facility, such as a SOD Busters collection yard.	Construction contractor, Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District	Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District	Incorporation of Procedures Into Project Plans: Project Design Implementation: Construction		
Mitigation Measure IV-8: The project shall incorporate the recommendations of the California Oak Mortality Task Force and implement the following sanitation practices for those using trails or walking through Phytophthora-infected areas. • **Identify infected trees within the trail corridor.** • **Restrictions of Recreation Activities During the Winter** During wet periods, *Phytopthora ramorum* seems to be most active and therefore most likely to start new infections. If possible, work or recreation in infested forested or shrub-covered areas shall be avoided during the wet, rainy, and cooler times of the year. Muddy conditions shall be avoided	Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District, Regional Parks Department	Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District	Incorporation of Procedures Into Project Plans: Project Design Informational Signage: Construction Implementation of Procedures: Post-Construction: On-		

Mitigation Measure	MONITORING			VERIFICATION	
	Implementation Entity	Monitoring and Verification Entity	Timing Requirements	Signature	Date
whenever possible. • **Management of Trail Use** The following information shall be prominently displayed on informational signage at the staging area at Jacobs Ranch: Trail users shall stay on established trails, respect trail closures, and park vehicles or bicycles in designated parking areas and out of the mud. The collection and transporting of wood, plants, acorns, leaves, soil or water from streams, ponds or rivers is prohibited. Carry cleaning materials in vehicles to use at the end of the trail visit. An old screwdriver, stiff brush, and towel are useful items for removing mud and other debris. An additional level of sanitation is recommended by washing hiking boots and shoes with soap and water or spraying with a disinfectant, such as Lysol© or a 10 percent bleach solution. • **Recommendations for Specific Groups of Trail Users** The following information shall be prominently displayed on informational signage at the staging area at Jacobs Ranch: Hikers/Runners: Remove soil and plant material from your shoes, followed by a water rinse and a disinfectant. If you are frequently in and out of contaminated sites, consider committing footwear for use in that environment only. Bicyclists: Remove soil and plant materials from your bike, shoes, and clothes. Rinse your bike and shoes with water and follow with a disinfectant.			going during project operation		

Mitigation Measure	MONITORING			VERIFICATION	
	Implementation Entity	Monitoring and Verification Entity	Timing Requirements	Signature	Date
Equestrians: Keep yourself and your horse clean by staying on established trails and out of contaminated areas. Clean any plant material and mud from the horse and its hooves with towels and brushes before leaving the site.					
CULTURAL RESOURCES					
Mitigation Measure V-1: To protect cultural materials located off the proposed trail but inside the project site, public access shall be restricted and limited to specific areas through restrictive signage, maps, and other means, and a general surface inspection of the area of the project site to which public access is allowed by the project (excluding Jack London State Historic Park, to which public access already exists) shall be completed to identify and record previously reported and unreported historic resources (rock walls, other architectural or land alteration features, concentrations of historic debris) and prehistoric use and occupation areas such as camp sites and quarry areas. These shall be photo-documented to establish a record of their state of preservation prior to the introduction of the trail system. Annual re-inspection of these resources shall be undertaken to assess the impacts which may be caused by park visitors and to aid in the implementation of protective measures for threatened resource areas. If subsequent field investigations of any of these resources reveal that they are in fact being damaged by visitors, proactive measures shall be taken to protect them, as determined by a qualified professional archaeologist to current professional standards. Protective measures may include, but are not limited to, fencing or signage to keep people out of sensitive areas, removal of the resources for protection, burying prehistoric archaeological deposits under imported fill, and protecting prehistoric archaeological deposits by landscaping with poison oak or blackberry plants.	Construction contractor, Archaeological consultant	Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District	Restriction of Public Access and General Surface Inspection: Construction Re-Inspection of Resources Identified in General Surface Inspection: Post-Construction: Annually Protective Measures for Resources Identified in General Surface Inspection: Post-Construction: As specified by General Surface Inspection		

Mitigation Measure	MONITORING			VERIFICATION	
	Implementation Entity	Monitoring and Verification Entity	Timing Requirements	Signature	Date
Mitigation Measure V-2: The project sponsor (Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District) and construction contractors shall be prepared to respond appropriately if heretofore undetected archaeological resources are encountered anywhere in the project area. To set up and facilitate both the recommended monitoring in Mitigation Measure V-4 and the response procedure required under CEQA, a pre-construction meeting shall be arranged involving responsible project personnel, both onsite and managerial supervisory construction personnel, and the archaeological monitors. The purpose of this meeting will be to familiarize all involved parties with the provisions of this plan. Construction contractors shall be prepared to halt and/or relocate work while finds are identified, recorded, evaluated, and if warranted, mitigative activities carried out. In virtually all reasonably foreseeable circumstances, the appropriate mitigation action will be recording and removal of archaeological objects and data from the project area. The Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District will include a Native American monitor to participate in the pre-construction meeting. The District shall consult with the Native American Heritage Commission for any referral(s) for identify the most appropriate Native American monitor(s) to be invited. Supervisory and construction personnel shall therefore be made aware of the possibility of encountering archaeological materials in this sensitive zone. In this area, the most common and recognizable evidence of prehistoric archaeological resources are deposits of faunal bone (deer, other mammals, etc.), usually in a dark fine-grained soil (midden); stone flakes left from manufacturing stone tools, or the tools themselves (mortars, pestles, arrowheads and spear points); and human burials, often as dislocated bones. Historic materials older than 45 years (bottles, artifacts, trash pits,	Construction contractor	Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District	Pre-Construction Meeting: Pre-Construction Procedures for Archaeological Materials Encountered During Construction: Construction		

Mitigation Measure	MONITORING			VERIFICATION	
	Implementation Entity	Monitoring and Verification Entity	Timing Requirements	Signature	Date
structural remains, etc.) may also have scientific and cultural significance and should be more readily identified. If during the proposed construction project any such evidence is uncovered or encountered, all excavations within 10 meters/30 feet shall be halted long enough to call in the monitoring archaeologists to assess the situation and propose appropriate measures.					
Mitigation Measure V-3: The site of the chert flake scatter in the southern portion of the project site shall be recorded to current standards, including preparation of State Department of Parks and Recreation forms, a photographic baseline study of the cultural resources, and preparation of accurate maps of all resource deposits. Archaeological identification, inventory, evaluation, research and mitigation under provisions of CEQA shall be completely reported in a comprehensive manner, incorporating all methods used and data gained, thorough current scientific analysis of all data, and interpretation of any archaeological resources within a regional archaeological framework. Qualified professional archaeologists shall complete the report to current professional standards, and the data shall be made available to other qualified researchers following completion of the final report.	Archaeological consultant	Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District	Recording of Chert Flake Scatter: Pre-Construction		
Mitigation Measure V-4: All earth-disturbing activities in the vicinity of the archaeological site SON-2453 shall be monitored by a qualified archaeologist. Archaeological monitoring shall include the following, at a minimum: a) Timely notification prior to any excavations; b) Monitoring during all earth-moving or soil disturbing activities, however minor, until and unless the monitor determines that no impacts to potentially significant archaeological materials will occur; c) Specific requirements that archaeological monitors be notified	Archaeological consultant	Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District	Monitoring: Construction (during all earth-moving and soil disturbing activities) Final Report of Findings: Post-Construction		

Mitigation Measure	MONITORING			VERIFICATION	
	Implementation Entity	Monitoring and Verification Entity	Timing Requirements	Signature	Date
immediately if potentially significant archaeological resources are encountered anywhere in the absence of an onsite monitor; d) Authority of the onsite archaeological monitor to halt excavations if potentially significant archaeological materials or human remains are encountered; e) Time and space to record, photograph and map, recover, retrieve, and/or remove any significant archaeological materials during the construction process; f) Time and funding for laboratory cleaning, cataloging, analysis, and preparation for permanent curation of significant archaeological materials after onsite monitoring ends; and g) Time and funding for a Final Report of findings, to incorporate data developed for this report as appropriate and data developed by monitoring and analysis; additional historical and/or archival research may also be warranted. In addition to reporting to the project sponsor (Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District), copies of the Final Report must be submitted to the Northwest Information Center of the California Historical Resources Information System for inclusion in the permanent archives, and another copy shall accompany any curated archaeological materials and data. Archaeological data, reports, and recovered materials are and will remain the property of the property owners. The Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District will invite a Native American monitor to monitor earth-disturbing activities in the vicinity of the archaeological site SON-2453. The District shall consult with the Native American Heritage Commission for any referral(s) for Native American monitor(s). As part of the requirements of Mitigation Measure V-4,					

Mitigation Measure	MONITORING			VERIFICATION	
	Implementation Entity	Monitoring and Verification Entity	Timing Requirements	Signature	Date
archaeological identification, inventory, evaluation, research and mitigation under provisions of CEQA shall be completely reported in a comprehensive manner, incorporating all methods used and data gained, thorough current scientific analysis of all data, and interpretation of any archaeological resources within a regional archaeological framework. Qualified professional archaeologists shall complete the report to current professional standards, and the data shall be made available to other qualified researchers following completion of the final report. Appropriate specialized, focused scientific analytic techniques shall be applied (e.g., radiocarbon dating, obsidian sourcing and hydration, typological studies, geomorphological studies, faunal analysis, etc.). Obtaining, analyzing, interpreting, and reporting archaeological data from the project area would serve as mitigative compensation for any project-related impacts to resources.					
Mitigation Measure V-5: In the event that any human remains are encountered during road and/or bridge improvements, all ground–disturbing work shall cease immediately within the area specified by the archaeologist, and the County coroner must be notified immediately. If the coroner determines the remains to be Native American, the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) must be contacted within 24 hours. A qualified archaeologist, in consultation with a Most Likely Descendant named by the Native American Heritage Commission to represent the tribe in any recommendations to expose, remove and rebury the human remains and all associated grave goods, shall recommend subsequent measures for disposition of the remains.	Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District, archaeological consultant	Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District, Sonoma County Coroner; Native American Heritage Commission	Incorporation of Procedures Into Project Plans: Project Design Implementation: Construction		
Mitigation Measure V-6: If any paleontological resources are encountered during site grading or other construction activities, all ground disturbance shall be halted until the services of a qualified paleontologist can be retained to identify and evaluate the resource(s) and, if necessary, recommend mitigation measures to document and prevent any significant adverse effects on the	Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District, archaeological consultant	Sonoma County Permit and Resource Management Department	Procedures for Paleontological Resources Encountered During Construction:		

Mitigation Measure	MONITORING			VERIFICATION	
	Implementation Entity	Monitoring and Verification Entity	Timing Requirements	Signature	Date
resource(s).			Construction		
GEOLOGY AND SOILS					
Mitigation Measure VI-1: Implement Mitigation Measure VIII-1.	See Mitigation Measure VIII-1	See Mitigation Measure VIII-1	See Mitigation Measure VIII-1		
Mitigation Measure VI-2: Trail management of the North Slope Sonoma Mountain Ridge Trail shall contain the following management procedures: • Annual trail maintenance shall include brushing the trail corridor each fall to reduce vegetation growth into the trail travelway. The trail tread and drainage structures shall be maintained each fall to prepare the trail for the winter. After the winter storms, the trail shall be checked as soon as feasible to make any repairs needed. • During operation, the District or facility manager may enact temporary closure to public use due to weather, mud flows, high fire hazard, or other safety concerns or adverse conditions.	Sonoma County Regional Parks Department	Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District	Trail Maintenance: Post-Construction: Annually each fall during project operation Inspection After Winter Storms: Post-Construction: After substantial storms during project operation Temporary Closure: Post-Construction: As required during project operation		
HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS					
Mitigation Measure VII-1: Implement Mitigation Measure VIII-1.	See Mitigation Measure VIII-1	See Mitigation Measure VIII-1	See Mitigation Measure VIII-1		
Mitigation Measure VII-2: Prior to operation, the District or facility manager shall prepare and implement an operational Fire Safety Plan, which shall include provisions for temporary closure to public	Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and	Sonoma County Department of	Preparation of Operational Fire Safety Plan:		

Mitigation Measure	MONITORING			VERIFICATION	
	Implementation Entity	Monitoring and Verification Entity	Timing Requirements	Signature	Date
use due to high fire hazard. The operational Fire Safety Plan shall be reviewed by local emergency service providers and responsible agencies. The Fire Safety Plan shall address: • Procedures for reporting a fire. • Training to be given operator's employees regarding fire safety. • Procedures to be taken on 'red flag days' (days of extreme fire danger.) On red flag days, trail use would be prohibited. • Fire safety equipment the operator would have on site, e.g. Nomex, fire tents, fire extinguishers, five gallon water pumps, etc. • Procedures to ensure that any power equipment used on the project site is fire safe, and is equipped with spark arrestors. • A trail map clearly indicating emergency vehicle access points and logical landmarks for visitors to use to accurately describe their location within the trail corridor. This map would be shared with emergency service providers for review and input.	Open Space District	Emergency Services	Post-Construction: Prior to project operation Implementation of Operational Fire Safety Plan: Post-Construction: On-going		
HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY					
Mitigation Measure VIII-1: The project applicant shall develop and implement a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) for construction of the proposed project, as required by the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) and Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB). The SWPPP shall include, at a minimum, the following elements: • Source identification; • Preparation of a site map; • Description of construction materials, practices, and equipment storage and maintenance; • List of pollutants likely to contact storm water; • Estimate of the construction site area and percent impervious	Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District	Regional Water Quality Control Board	Preparation of SWPPP: Pre-Construction Implementation of SWPPP: Construction		

Mitigation Measure	MONITORING			VERIFICATION	
	Implementation Entity	Monitoring and Verification Entity	Timing Requirements	Signature	Date
area; • Erosion and sedimentation control practices, including soils stabilization, revegetation, and runoff control to limit increases in sediment in storm water runoff, such as detention basins, straw bales, silt fences, check dams, geofabrics, drainage swales, and sandbag dikes; • Proposed construction dewatering plans; • List of provisions to eliminate or reduce discharge of materials to storm water; • Description of waste management practices; and • Maintenance and training practices.					
Mitigation Measure VIII-2: Implement Mitigation Measure VIII-1.	See Mitigation Measure VIII-1	See Mitigation Measure VIII-1	See Mitigation Measure VIII-1		
NOISE					
Mitigation Measure XI-1: The project sponsor shall ensure that: Noise levels produced by construction activities shall not exceed 80-dBA level at any one moment. Construction activities shall be limited to the hours of 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM on Monday through Friday and 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM on Saturdays. Construction activities shall be prohibited on Sunday and any national holiday. "Quieter" models of equipment, (such as gas or electric equipment as opposed to diesel-powered equipment) shall be used where technology exists, or all construction equipment shall have sound-control devices no less effective than those provided on the original equipment. No equipment shall have unmuffled exhaust. Loud equipment shall not be staged within 200 feet of noise-sensitive receptors. The applicant shall designate a "noise disturbance coordinator" who is responsible for responding to any local complaints about	Construction contractor, Sonoma County Regional Parks Department	Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District	Construction		

Mitigation Measure	MONITORING			VERIFICATION	
	Implementation Entity	Monitoring and Verification Entity	Timing Requirements	Signature	Date
construction noise. The noise disturbance coordinator shall determine the source of noise complaints (e.g. starting too early, bad muffler, etc) and institute reasonable measures to correct the problem. A telephone number for the noise disturbance coordinator and approved construction hours shall be posted at the site on conspicuous signage. The noise disturbance coordinator shall contact and advise adjacent noise-sensitive receptors of the construction schedule. The use of loud sound signals shall be avoided in favor of light warnings except those required by safety laws for the protection of personnel. Following the commencement of construction and as directed by the County of Sonoma, the contractor(s) shall implement appropriate noise mitigation measures including, but not limited to, changing the location of stationary construction equipment, shutting off idling equipment, rescheduling construction activity, or notifying adjacent residents in advance of construction work.					
IMPROVEMENT MEASURE					
Improvement Measures are not required to mitigate potentially significant impacts identified in this Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration, but would improve or enhance the proposed project. The District may wish to consider implementing these improvement measures.					
Improvement Measure XV-1: Trim the second, third, and fourth trees to the east of the existing driveway on the south side of the road.	Construction contractor	Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District	Construction		

APPENDICES

Notice of Intent to Adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration. October 15, 2007.

State Clearinghouse letter and Document Details Report

Proof of Publication, *The Press Democrat.* October 21 and 28, 2007.

SONOMA COUNTY
AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION
AND OPEN SPACE DISTRICT

NOTICE OF INTENT TO ADOPT A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

SONOMA COUNTY AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION
AND OPEN SPACE DISTRICT
747 MENDOCINO AVENUE, Suite 100
SANTA ROSA, CA 95401

PHONE: (707) 565-7360
FAX: (707) 565-7359
kbatchel@sonoma-county.org

The Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District (District) is intending to adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration for the following project in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act:

NORTH SLOPE SONOMA MOUNTAIN RIDGE TRAIL PROJECT

PROJECT LOCATION: The proposed project site is on the north slope of Sonoma Mountain in southeastern Sonoma County, California. The trail would connect Jack London State Historic Park on the east and the Jacobs Ranch (which is located south of Sonoma Mountain Road) on the west.

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT: The *North Slope Sonoma Mountain Ridge Trail Project* would consist of a 4.25-mile trail on the north slope of Sonoma Mountain in southeastern Sonoma County, connecting on the east with the existing Hayfields Trail at Jack London State Historic Park and on the west with a new public parking/trail staging area at Jacobs Ranch, including improvements to the existing driveway that provides access to Sonoma Mountain Road. The proposed project would include two alternative routes through a segment of the central portion of the project site, as well as two trail spurs, and would comprise a segment of the regional Bay Area Ridge Trail. A more detailed description of the project is on file at the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District at the address listed above.

PROJECT PURPOSE: The purpose of the *North Slope Sonoma Mountain Ridge Trail Project* is to provide a public trail with access to the views, habitat, and landscape features of the Sonoma Mountain Region and to provide a segment of the Bay Area Ridge Trail connecting Jack London State Historic Park and Jacobs Ranch.

FINDING: On the basis of the Initial Study, the General Manager of the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District has determined that, with the incorporation of the mitigation measures proposed in the Initial Study, the proposed project would not have a significant adverse effect on the environment.

COMMENT PERIOD: The Initial Study and proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration are available for public review at the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District office, the Santa Rosa City Hall, and the Sonoma Valley and Santa Rosa Central Libraries. You can also find this document on our web site: www.SonomaOpenSpace.org. Written comments should be addressed to Kim Batchelder, Natural Resources Planner for the District. The address and phone number are listed above. The posting and review period for the proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration is:

October 15 – November 15, 2007

PUBLIC MEETINGS: The Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District's Board of Directors (Board) is the decision-making body responsible for adopting the proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration and approving the proposed project. The Board meeting at which these actions would be undertaken has not yet been scheduled.

Please call Kim Batchelder at the number listed above if you have questions regarding this Notice.

Posting and mailing date: October 15, 2007

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

GOVERNOR'S OFFICE of PLANNING AND RESEARCH

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE AND PLANNING UNIT

ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER
GOVERNOR

CYNTHIA BRYANT
DIRECTOR

November 15, 2007

Kim Batchelder
Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation & Open Space District
747 Mendocino Ave., Suite 100
Santa Rosa, CA 95401

Subject: North Slope Sonoma Mountain Ridge Trail Project
SCH#: 2007102071

Dear Kim Batchelder:

The State Clearinghouse submitted the above named Mitigated Negative Declaration to selected state agencies for review. The review period closed on November 13, 2007, and no state agencies submitted comments by that date. This letter acknowledges that you have complied with the State Clearinghouse review requirements for draft environmental documents, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act.

Please call the State Clearinghouse at (916) 445-0613 if you have any questions regarding the environmental review process. If you have a question about the above-named project, please refer to the ten-digit State Clearinghouse number when contacting this office.

Sincerely,

Terry Roberts
Director, State Clearinghouse

RECEIVED
DATE 11/19/07
C: MC/KB
O: File

1400 10th Street P.O. Box 3044 Sacramento, California 95812-3044
(916) 445-0613 FAX (916) 323-3018 www.opr.ca.gov

Document Details Report
State Clearinghouse Data Base

SCH# 2007102071
Project Title North Slope Sonoma Mountain Ridge Trail Project
Lead Agency Sonoma County

Type MN Mitigated Negative Declaration
Description D

The North Slope Mountain Ridge Trail Project would consist of a 4.25-mi trail on the north slope of Sonoma Mountain, connecting on the east with the existing Hayfields Trail at Jack London State Historic Park and on the west with a new public parking/ trail staging area at Jacobs Ranch, including improvements to the existing driveway that provides access to Sonoma Mountain Road. The proposed project would include 2 alternative routes through a segment of the central portion of the project site, as well as two trail spurs, and would comprise a segment of the regional Bay Area Ridge Trail.

Lead Agency Contact

Name Kim Batchelder
Agency Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation & Open Space District
Phone (707) 565-7360 **Fax**
email
Address 747 Mendocino Ave., Suite 100
City Santa Rosa **State** CA **Zip** 95401

Project Location

County Sonoma
City Santa Rosa
Region
Cross Streets Sonoma Mountain Road, Bennett Valley Road
Parcel No.
Township **Range** **Section** **Base**

Proximity to:

Highways
Airports
Railways
Waterways Matanzas Creek; South Fork Matanzas Creek
Schools
Land Use

Project Issues Aesthetic/Visual; Air Quality; Archaeologic-Historic; Biological Resources; Noise; Geologic/Seismic; Public Services; Recreation/Parks; Soil Erosion/Compaction/Grading; Traffic/Circulation; Water Quality; Vegetation; Wetland/Riparian; Landuse

Reviewing Agencies Resources Agency; Department of Fish and Game, Region 3; Cal Fire; Office of Historic Preservation; Department of Parks and Recreation; California Highway Patrol; Caltrans, District 4; Native American Heritage Commission; State Lands Commission; Regional Water Quality Control Board, Region 1; Air Resources Board, Transportation Projects; California Coastal Commission

Date Received 10/12/2007 **Start of Review** 10/12/2007 **End of Review** 11/13/2007

Note: Blanks in data fields result from insufficient information provided by lead agency.

PROOF OF PUBLICATION

(2015.5 C.C.P.)

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

County of Sonoma

I am a citizen of the United States and a resident of the county aforesaid: I am over the age of eighteen years, and not a party to or interested in the above entitled matter. I am the principal clerk of the printer of The Press Democrat, a newspaper of general circulation, printed and published DAILY IN THE City of Santa Rosa, County of Sonoma; and which newspaper has been adjudged a newspaper of general circulation by the Superior Court of the County of Sonoma, State of California, under the date of November 29, 1951, Case number 34831, that the notice, of which the annexed is a printed copy (set in type not smaller than nonpareil), has been published in each regular and entire issue of said newspaper and not in any supplement thereof on the following dates to wit:

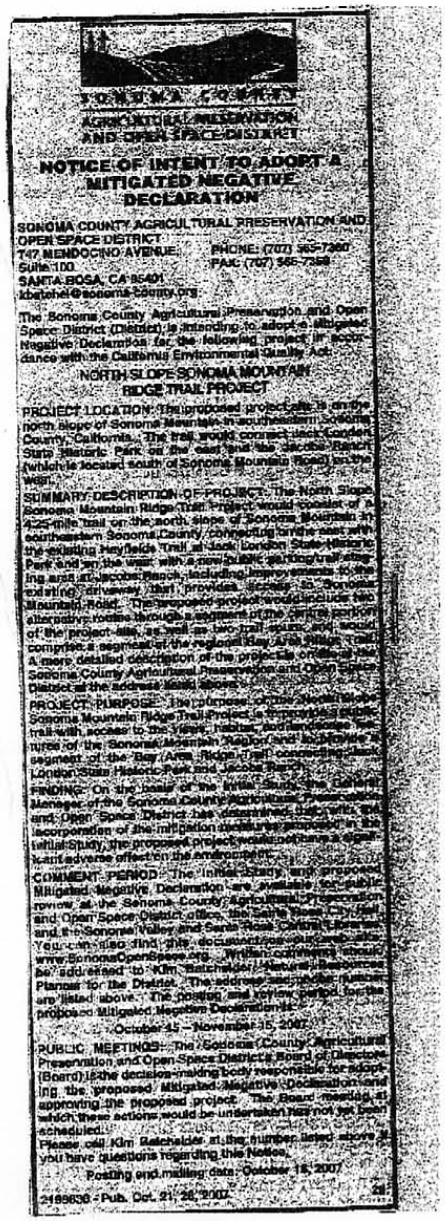
The Press Democrat
10/21 1x, s10/28 1x - 10/28/2007

I certify (or declare) under penalty of perjury, under the laws of the State of California, that the foregoing is true and correct.

Dated at Santa Rosa, California, on

10/28/2007

Roxanne Nasan
SIGNATURE



SONOMA COUNTY
AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION
AND OPEN SPACE DISTRICT

NOTICE OF INTENT TO ADOPT A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

SONOMA COUNTY AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION AND OPEN SPACE DISTRICT
747 MENDOCINO AVENUE, Suite 100
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PROJECT PURPOSE: The purpose of the North Slope Sonoma Mountain Ridge Trail Project is to provide a public trail with access to the views, habitat, and [illegible] features of the Sonoma Mountain Ridge and to complete a segment of the Bay Area Ridge Trail connecting Jack London State Historic Park and Jacobs Ranch.

FINDING: On the basis of the Initial Study, the District Manager of the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District has determined that, with the incorporation of the mitigation measures proposed in the Initial Study, the proposed project would not have a significant adverse effect on the environment.

COMMENT PERIOD: The Initial Study and proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration are available for public review at the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District office, the Santa Rosa City Hall, and the Sonoma Valley and Santa Rosa Regional Libraries. You can also find this document on the District's website at www.SonomaOpenSpace.org. Written comments should be addressed to Kim Batchelor, Natural Resource Planner for the District. The address and phone number are listed above. The posting and review period for the proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration is:

October 15 – November 15, 2007

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Please call Kim Batchelor at the number listed above if you have questions regarding the Notice.

Posting and mailing date: October 15, 2007

2499630 - Pub. Oct. 21, 28, 2007