

CHAPTER 5. OTHER CEQA REQUIRED DISCUSSIONS

This chapter provides discussions of the following CEQA-mandated discussions: growth inducement, cumulative impacts, significant irreversible environmental changes that would be involved in the Project, should it be implemented, and unavoidable significant effects.

5.1 GROWTH INDUCEMENT

An EIR must discuss the ways in which the proposed project could foster economic or population growth, or the construction of additional housing, either directly or indirectly, in the surrounding environment (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15126.2(d)). Projects that would remove obstacles to population growth, such as an expansion of a wastewater treatment plant, are also considered when discussing growth inducement. Increases in population may also tax community service facilities, requiring construction of new facilities that could cause significant environmental effects.

The Project would not have any direct or indirect effect on inducement of additional population growth in Napa County. While the vineyard would expand acreage under agricultural production in the County in accordance with the General Plan and zoning for the Project site, it would not stimulate significant additional growth in the agricultural industry. In addition, permanent employment of one vineyard manager, and employment of approximately 30 seasonal workers during the harvest would not be sufficient to induce population growth in the County.

5.2 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Cumulative impacts refer to two or more individual effects that, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts. The individual effects may be changes resulting from a single project or a number of separate projects. The cumulative impact from several projects is the change in the environment that results from the incremental impact of the Project when added to other closely related past, present, and reasonably foreseeable probable future projects. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant projects taking place over a period of time (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15355).

Analysis of cumulative effects must include both regional effects in addition to potentially cumulatively significant localized effects. Napa County is the region considered for the cumulative biological resources. For the cumulative geology and hydrology evaluations, the Rodgers Southwest, South and Southeast Gulch, Sage

Canyon Road Gulch and Lake Hennessey Gulch catchments are considered because these are the areas affected by the Project.

5.2.1 Biological Resources

Grassland areas throughout the project area and other areas within the Napa Valley are being converted to vineyard and wineries at a rapid rate. While the project would disturb 1.37 acres of serpentine grassland, this impact is not considered significant because there are no formal protections to this species, there are no special-status species within the habitat, and because the majority of the habitat would be avoided. Furthermore, this impact would not be cumulatively considerable, given that there is a total of 2,119 acres of serpentine grassland in Napa County, which represents 0.42% of the land area within the County (Napa County Baseline Data Report, 2005).

5.2.2 Geology and Soils/Hydrology

Currently there are no projects planned within the off-site catchment areas of the Long and City of Napa properties evaluated in this cumulative analysis. There would be no off-site (i.e. downstream) impacts to sediment yield due to the project, under future and cumulative conditions. With the proposed project, there would be a reduction in surface erosion ranging between 44% and 85% within the individual vineyard blocks, with an average hillslope surface erosion reduction of 54.3%. This decrease in surface erosion is primarily a result of the increased ground surface cover that would be established as part of the project. Under project conditions, ground surface cover would increase from the existing 60% (or 50% in places of intense grazing) to 80% in the proposed vineyard blocks. Due to continued cattle grazing on the property, it is assumed that current levels of surface erosion in areas outside of the proposed vineyard blocks would remain unchanged.

Installation of the ECPA would result in an increase in volume and peak discharge in the Rodgers Southeast Gulch and the Sage Canyon Road Gulch catchments. Mitigation measures that require the use of mechanical contouring techniques for portions of the proposed vineyard blocks within the relevant catchments would reduce these impacts, such that no downstream, or cumulative, impacts would result.

5.3 SIGNIFICANT IRREVERSIBLE ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES

“Significant irreversible environmental changes” include the use of nonrenewable natural resources during the initial and continued phases of the Project, should this use result in the unavailability of these resources in the future. Primary impacts and, particularly, secondary impacts (such as a highway improvement which provides access to a previously inaccessible area) generally commit future generations to similar uses.

Also irreversible damage can result from environmental accidents associated with projects. Irretrievable commitments of these resources are required to be evaluated in an EIR to assure that such current consumption is justified (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15126.2(c)).

Natural resources include minerals, energy, land, water, forestry, and biota. Nonrenewable resource are those resources that cannot be replenished by natural means, including oil, natural gas, and iron ore. Renewable natural resources are those resources that can be replenished by natural means, including water, lumber, and soil.

Although the Project would use minor amounts of both renewable and nonrenewable natural resources for Project construction, this use would not increase the overall rate of use of any natural resource, or result in the substantial depletion of any nonrenewable natural resource.

The Project is not proposing the development of a previously inaccessible area. Vineyard development has occurred and would continue to occur in the area with or without the Project, based on development allowed by the existing Napa County Land Use Plan and zoning. Thus, the Project would not commit future generations to a significant irreversible change. Conversion to agricultural land is not considered an entirely irreversible type of development.

Lastly, the Project is not anticipated to result in irreversible damage from environmental accidents, such as an accidental spill or explosion of a hazardous material. During the construction of the Project, equipment would be using various types of fuel (petroleum products, as would be diesel fuel and gasoline). In the State of California, the storage and use of hazardous substances are strictly regulated and enforced by various local and regional agencies. The enforcement of these existing regulations would preclude significant Project impacts related to environmental accidents.

5.4 UNAVOIDABLE SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS

As required by the CEQA Guidelines (Section 15126.2(b)), an EIR must describe any significant impacts that cannot be avoided, including those that can be mitigated but not reduced to a less than significant level. Chapter 4 of this Draft EIR provides a description of the potential environmental impacts of the Project and identifies various mitigation measures to reduce impacts, to the extent feasible. After implementation of the identified mitigation measures, all of the impacts associated with the Project would be reduced to a less-than-significant level.