

GROWERS/VINTNERS FOR RESPONSIBLE AGRICULTURE

Summary from Strategic Plan Focus Group with County held on 9/20/18

September 26, 2018

Problem Statement: We are in an existential struggle to save the agricultural and environmental integrity of Napa Valley.

Current Situation: There are competing interests in our community, and we are concerned about this Valley's future. We place the highest value on the rural, agrarian quality of life which drew us all here. Napa Valley is a **National Treasure** and as such deserves to be stewarded with great care. Our natural resources are finite and we are living in a time of great climate upheaval. All of us in Napa County are now dealing with the harsh realities of mega droughts and record breaking temperatures. Threats to the quality and quantity of our diminishing water supply loom large due to increasing pressure to develop in the hillsides and the lack of rock solid, fully enforced protection of fresh water for today and long into the future. Municipalities augment their limited local water supplies with imports from the State Water Project, a water source that is already over allocated and is becoming scarcer due to changes in precipitation and snowpack. We need a long-term vision.

Actions: We offer the following Actions to address the above concerns, distilled into two main areas:

1. Agricultural Integrity

- a. WDO: Restore the definition of Agriculture in our Winery Definition Ordinance back to what it was in the WDO's original form
 - i. Agriculture (defined as growing and harvesting of crops and stock) and production (defined as conversion of crops and stock into products for human use) dominant, all other uses ancillary
 - ii. The hospitality area at wineries is as calculated must be changed (too broad now)
- b. Enforce use permits and codes to ensure no violations
 - i. Codify variances strictly to reduce their use
 - ii. 75% rule must be honored and enforced
 - iii. Strict compliance with CEQA (cumulative impacts of projects must be considered). Require permit violators to operate within their permits. County must match inventory of grapes to permit wine production
 1. Violations must be corrected and adhered to for a minimum period of time before a variance can be applied for and/or granted.
 2. Fines need to be levied for violations – especially in the case of intentional disregard of existing permits.
 - iv. Define and codify which projects require an EIR versus those that get a mitigated negative declaration
- c. Increase minimum acreage for a winery to 40 acres
 - i. Although I agree that the current 10 acre minimum may be too small, I also believe a 40 acre minimum is too big and will only serve to increase the disparity of wealth already present in the valley.
 - ii. Small scale winemaking should be prioritized over large scale winemaking (say <6,000 gallons or approximately 50 tons or less).
 1. A regulation of 100% county of origin and/or estate grown may be useful to encourage small scale winemaking.
 - iii. Local housing considerations for staff should be a part of granting any new winery permits.

- d. Human Resources: to farm and produce well, we need a solid local labor force that can get to work with minimal traffic. Minimizing hospitality activities and focusing on agriculture will decrease traffic and increase housing available to our vineyard and winery (production) workers
 - i. Affordable housing for both farmworkers and families needs to be a priority. As an example, enrollment in St. Helena schools is declining because families cannot afford to purchase/rent/live in St. Helena. The number of vacant, second homes in St. Helena is increasing.
- e. Prohibit Hold and Haul
 - i. Except in cases when an existing system is damaged and is being (in process) repaired.

2. Environmental Protection

- a. Enhance protections for our watershed, thus restoring the health of the Napa River and our reservoirs which will ensure the integrity of the Ag Preserve by:
 - i. Allowing no more deforestation of our oak woodlands and establishing a County policy to control Timber Harvest Plans
 - 1. How is deforestation defined? Is a Live Oak the same as a Valley Oak? I believe a blanket statement of “no more deforestation” is too broad and leaves little options in the way of forest management.
 - a. There needs to be a method to manage forest density, age and diversity.
 - i. Current “no management” practices, particularly on the west side of the valley and around Deer Park and Angwin, are recipies for disastrous fire conditions.
 - ii. Overgrowth is as detrimental to watershed health as deforestation.
 - b. Management of invasive species needs to be facilitated.
 - c. Recruitment and rejuvenation in decrepit areas needs to be encouraged.
 - 2. Make mandatory the current voluntary oak woodland plan and increase the mitigation ratio to three to one with appropriate enforcement
 - a. Except in cases where a 3:1 mitigation will result in over-crowding as trees mature.
 - b.
 - 3. Promote Forest Safe Wine certification (and require it for any new applications for wineries or vineyards)
 - 4. Establish a Forest Management Plan in order to minimize fire danger
 - a. See above comments regarding species differences, “no management,” overgrowth and rejuvenation.
 - ii. Enhance water quality buffer zones for streams and wetlands
 - 1. Buffer zones should include revegetation of native species and not simply be perimeter avenues and setbacks.-
 - iii. Not approve any new vineyards or wineries for which water must be trucked in or wastewater trucked out
 - 1. Allow no wineries or vineyards if the existing infrastructure (roads, water, etc.) cannot support them
 - 2. Consider ways to reduce the dangers to human life by restricting development in areas subject to “cut off” from fires
 - iv. Encourage (or require) progressive, enlightened, chemical use reductions in farming practices

- v. Greenhouse Gasses: complete Climate Action Plan to address this
- vi. Require minimum 2 lane road standards for new permit development