VINYL VINEYARDS
4374 UNION ROAD
SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY, CA

(APN: 015-053-003)

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES ASSESSMENT

January 22, 2021

Prepared for:

OASIS ASSOCIATES, INC.
3427 Miguelito Court
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

Prepared by:

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JANUARY 22, 2021

As a County-approved biologist and lead investigator, I hereby certify that this Biological Resources Assessment was prepared according to the Guidelines established by the County of San Luis Obispo Department of Planning and Building and that the statements furnished in the report and associated maps are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief; and I further certify that I was present throughout the site visits described in this report associated with this study.

Date: January 22, 2021

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VINYL VINEYARDS PROJECT
BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES ASSESSMENT

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Vinyl Vineyards project (project) proposes a winery facility, two areas for incidental camping sites, and related infrastructure at 4374 Union Road approximately 1.4 miles south of State Highway 46 in unincorporated San Luis Obispo County (APN: 025-434-002) on an approximate 120-acre site. The site currently supports disturbed non-native annual grassland habitat, a blue oak woodland than line unnamed blueline drainage corridors, active vineyards, and an existing developed residential area with multiple structures. Site development would be limited to existing disturbed annual grassland areas and existing dirt ranch road corridors.

The search and review of the CNDDB revealed twenty (20) special-status wildlife species and seventeen (17) special-status plant species with recorded occurrences within the approximately ten-mile search radius of the proposed project site. Field surveys including reconnaissance surveys conducted in December 2020 and January 2021 to establish existing conditions of the proposed project site and to confirm that no special-status plant or wildlife species have the potential to occur within proposed development areas. Although a full botanical inventory has not been completed during the appropriate time of year, the site is not expected to support any special-status plant species due to lack of suitable habitat and its highly maintained/developed condition. The conversion of non-native annual grassland may result in the displacement of common local wildlife within the parcel and is considered to be a less than significant impact. Locally common resident and migratory birds that use the site for breeding, foraging, and roosting could be impacted by project construction. Although direct impacts are unlikely, the site is within the County-designated movement corridor for the San Joaquin kif fox. No impacts to oaks or waters of the U.S./State are proposed and as such there are no impacts. Mitigation to reduce potentially significant impacts on nesting birds and for the San Joaquin kit fox are recommended.

Based on the findings described in this Biological Resources Assessment (BRA), establishing the existing conditions setting of the proposed project site, and incorporation of the recommended mitigation measures, implementation of the proposed project would not result in any substantial adverse effects on biological, botanical, wetland habitat resources. Therefore, with mitigation measures incorporated into the project, direct and indirect project impacts on biological resources would be considered to be less than significant.

2.0 INTRODUCTION, PROJECT DESCRIPTION, AND PURPOSE

The Vinyl Vineyards Project (project) proposes a winery facility, two incidental camping sites, and related infrastructure at 4374 Union Road approximately 1.4 miles south of State Highway 46 in unincorporated San Luis Obispo County (APN: 025-434-002). Access to the project site will be from Union Road. The property has multiple residential structures, several barns / agricultural outbuildings, and portions of the property have been actively cultivated going back to at least 2003 as shown on the publicly available aerial photography. Several clusters of blue oak and non-native trees surround the structures. Native stands of blue oak line the unnamed blueline drainages that traverse the property and that are tributary to Huerhuero Creek. The project site is bordered to the south and east by a large expanse of active vineyards, and a mix of vineyard, winery facilities, and natural areas to the west and

northwest. The Study Area included within this Biological Resource Assessment (BRA) included the entire approximately 120-acre parcel.

Appendix A Figures 1 and 2 provide a regional and USGS vicinity location maps, while Figure 3 provides an aerial vicinity map. The proposed project would result in temporary and permanent impacts up to approximately 1.5 acres of the site for proposed winery and incidental camping facilities. Existing access roads would be utilized to access all project components (Appendix A, Figures 4 and 5).

Sage Institute, Inc. (SII) conducted the review of available background data, aerial photographs, and a biological field survey on the project site on December 8, 2020 and January 11, 2021. The purpose of this BRA is to document existing conditions of the proposed project site and to evaluate the potential for any direct or indirect significant impacts on biological or wetland resources, or adverse effects on any rare, threatened, or endangered plant or wildlife species (special-status species).

3.0 EXISTING CONDITIONS

The proposed project site is surrounded by a mix of winery facilities, vineyards/agricultural, and rural ranch uses. Review of available aerial photography shows that a large portion of the Study Area has been in active vineyard cultivation going back to at least 2003. Observations during the December and January field surveys indicated except for drainage corridors, much of the site was recently disced and/or mowed. Grassland areas were had an herbaceous cover dominated by ruderal non-native herbaceous annual plant species. Blue oaks line the unnamed blueline drainages that traverse the site, and are scattered elsewhere on the property, including the vineyard. Isolated riparian vegetation and potential wetland habitat was observed in impounded areas of the unnamed drainages that are located outside the project footprint.

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS; Soil Conservation Service, 1977) has identified five soil series mapping units (see Figure 4) within the project site. Onsite soils are mapped as Arbuckle-Positas complex (102), 9 to 15 percent slopes, Arbuckle-Positas complex (103), 15 to 30 percent slopes, Arbuckle-Positas complex (105), 50 to 75 percent slopes, Arbuckle-San Ysidro Complex (106), 2 to 9 percent slopes, and Nacimiento-Los Osos complex (179), 9 to 30 percent slopes. None of the soils are classified by the NRCS as hydric soils that are typically more likely to support wetlands. In general, field observations of the surface soils affirmed the NRCS soils description throughout the project site.

The following summarizes the onsite soil components that comprise the soil mapping units identified above:

- The Arbuckle component is a very deep, well-drained soil with moderately low permeability formed in alluvium from mixed rocks. Typically, the surface layer is pale brown fine sandy loam to 10 inches thick.
- The San Ysidro component is a very deep, moderately well drained soil with very slow permeability formed in alluvium from mixed rocks. Typically, the surface layer is pale brown loam about 20 inches thick.
- The Positas component consists of alluvium from mixed rock sources. Depth to a root restrictive layer, abrupt textural change, is 9 to 20 inches. The natural drainage class is well drained.
- The Nacimiento component is typically found on hills and has parent material that consists of residuum weathered from calcareous shale and/or sandstone and depth to a bedrock is 20 to 40 inches. The natural drainage class is well drained.

- The Los Osos component makes up 20 percent of the map unit. Slopes are 9 to 30 percent. This soil is typically found on hills. The parent material consists of residuum weathered from shale and/or sandstone and depth to bedrock is 20 to 40 inches. The natural drainage class is well drained.

4.0 METHODS

Prior to field surveys SII biologists conducted a review of available background information including aerial photography of the project area (Google Earth, ESRI, NAIP), the Soil Survey (Natural Resources Conservation Service), and the 10-mile radius query results of the California Natural Diversity Data Base (CNDDB). The CNDDB provided a list and mapped locations of special-status plant and wildlife species, and natural communities of special concern, that have been recorded in the region of the project site. The CNDDB occurrences help to focus the field survey efforts and evaluation of potential project effects on specific species or habitats. It is noted that the CNDDB does not necessarily include all potential special-status species potentially occurring onsite or in the region, but rather only those that have been recorded by the CNDDB. A CNDDB query singularly for the San Joaquin kit fox was also conducted to complete the San Luis Obispo County standard San Joaquin kit fox habitat evaluation form to assess the value of the project site for this species.

SII Principal Biologist Jason Kirschenstein conducted a field reconnaissance survey of the site on December 8, 2020 and January 11, 2021. The survey was conducted by walking and/or driving the entirety of the proposed project site recording readily observable plant and wildlife species observed and general site characteristics. The site survey was conducive to the purpose of documenting plant and wildlife to establish existing conditions. The purpose of the field surveys was to document existing conditions in terms of habitat for plant and wildlife species, suitability for special-status species, the potential to support wetland and/or riparian habitats, and/or waters of the U.S./State. The Study Area habitat types were described by the aggregation of plants and wildlife based on the composition and structure of the dominant vegetation observed at the time the field reconnaissance was conducted.

The survey data collected on plant and wildlife species and conclusions presented in this biological and wetland assessment are based on the methods and field reconnaissance conducted over the project site as described above.

5.0 RESULTS

5.1 HABITAT TYPES AND PLANT COMMUNITIES

Natural/native plant communities are generally described by the assemblages of plant species that occur together in the same area forming habitat types and alliance used in this report follow *A manual of California vegetation, 2nd edition* (Sawyer et al. 2009). However, the “manual” does not include any agricultural alliances. The Wildlife Habitat Relationship System (WHR) provides a “Orchard/Vineyard” habitat type described in, A Guide to Wildlife Habitats of California (Laudenslayer et. al 1988) that is most appropriate classification for this project site. Plant names used in this report follow *The Jepson Manual, Vascular Plants of California, Second Edition Thoroughly Revised and Expanded* (Baldwin et al. 2012). The proposed project site supports developed/ruderal, agricultural, blue oak woodland and non-native annual grassland. Figure 5 in Appendix A provides a habitat map showing the location and extent of habitat types on the proposed project site. Figure 6 includes a set of representative photographs of the site.

5.1.1 BLUE OAK WOODLAND & FOREST

Blue oak woodland (CNPS: 71.020.00) comprises 16.0 acres of the Study Area and is mostly associated with the unnamed blueline drainages that traverse the property as shown in Figure 5. These corridors generally extend beyond the top-of-bank (TOB) that is not disced, and as such represents the most undisturbed native habitat within the Study Area. Blue oaks (*Quercus douglassii*) of all size classes were observed, although the majority of trees are mature. Understory within these areas is comprised of non-native annual grassland as described in Section 4.1.3 below.

5.1.2 DEVELOPED / RUDERAL

Developed / ruderal comprises 5.8 acres of the Study Area and is mostly associated with the southwest corner of the project site is developed land with residences, several barn/farm structures, along with compacted roads and parking/storage areas lacking vegetation. Scattered blue oaks and non-native landscaping shrubs, pine trees, and pepper trees were observed scattered around the buildings.

5.1.3 DISTURBED ANNUAL GRASSLAND

The disturbed non-native annual grassland habitat, or semi-natural annual brome grassland alliance (CNPS: 42.026.00), is typically dominated by non-native annual grasses and herbaceous broadleaf plant species, along with native forbs and wildflowers. Annual grassland habitat occurs as patches of habitat and within the understory of the blue oak woodland as depicted in Figure 5. This habitat covers 66.8 acres of the project site and is mowed and/or disced annually for weed suppression.

The non-native annual grassland within the project was observed to be relatively low in species diversity and dominated by mixed stands of slender wild oats (*Avena barbata),* soft chess (*Bromus hordeaceus),* ripgut brome *(B. diandrus),* vetch (*Vicia sativa*), and rattail fescue (*Festuca myuros*). Other common non-native forbs observed include mustards (*Hirschfeldia; Brassica),* fillarees *(Erodium cicutarium, E. botrys),* prickly lettuce (*Lactuca serriola)*, yellow-star thistle (*Centaurea solstitialis*), and morning glory (*Convolvulus arvensis*). Native herbaceous species expected to occur in low abundance include species such as sky lupine (*Lupinus nanus*), California poppy (Eschscholzia californica), narrow leaf milkweed (*Asclepia fascicularis*), and clustered tarweed (*Deinandra fasciculata*).

5.1.4 VINEYARD

Approximately 30 acres of vineyard located in the southeast portion of the Study Area has been in operation since at least 2003. This area is typical of vineyard operations in the region and includes a few blue oak trees that are scattered among the vineyard. This habitat designation also includes primary vineyard access road roads and equipment areas.

5.1.5 Stock Pond / Freshwater Marsh

Freshwater marshes typically occur in nutrient-rich mineral soils that drain slowly and are waterlogged or saturated for most or all of the year. Freshwater marsh plant communities are characterized by the presence of emergent hydrophytes (plants adapted to growing in saturated

soils and standing water) including rushes, sedges, cattails and grass species. Some freshwater marshes are vernal, filling with winter and spring rains and drying out in the summer.

The approximately 1-acre stock pond / freshwater marsh within the Study Area is man-made and is supported by a substantial permanent earthen dam structure. Although the pond was dry in of December 2020 and January 2021, evidence of species observed include sedge and curly dock. Much of the pond area was unvegetated with its cracked mud bottom exposed due its completely dry condition. Based on historic aerial review, it appears that the amount of open water and vegetation density varies greatly depending on annual precipitation and appears to be seasonal, at least over the past several years.

5.2 WILDLIFE OVERVIEW

Evidence of California ground squirrels, meadow mice, gophers, brush rabbit, deer, and coyote were observed within the Study Area. Western scrub jay, oak titmouse, Bewick's wren, black phoebe, spotted towhee, California towhee, yellow-rumped warbler, Acorn woodpecker, house finch, and northern flicker were also observed. One adult red-tailed hawk was observed foraging over the Study Area. Botta's gopher burrows were observed throughout the Study Area. California ground squirrel burrows were observed but are primarily located along the banks of the drainage corridors where routine maintenance is not feasible. Depending on the type and cycle of vineyard maintenance, and season of the year, common bird species such as sparrows, blackbirds, and European starlings likely frequent the area.

The highly disturbed non-native annual grassland habitat within the surrounding mosaic of vineyards around the project site provides minimal quality habitat for wildlife species that have become adapted to this type of environment. The vineyard and surrounding urbanized land uses around the project site provides minimal quality habitat for wildlife species because of the regular tilling and disturbance.

Generally oak woodlands provide high quality habitat for a large variety of wildlife species, and they also contribute woody debris to the duff in the woodland understory which provides foraging areas for small mammals and microclimates suitable for amphibians and reptiles. Acorns are a valuable food source for many animal species, including acorn woodpecker (*Melanerpes formicivorus*), western bluebird (*Sialia mexicana*), western scrub jay (*Aphelocoma corulescens*), yellow-billed magpie (*Pica nuttalli*), American crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*), great horned owl (*Bubo virginianus*), western gray squirrel (*Scirus griseus*), big-eared woodrat (*Neotoma macrotis macrotis*), and black-tailed deer (*Odocoieus emionus*). Oak trees provide nesting habitat for numerous passerine birds as well as for raptors. Common passerines that nest in oak woodlands of the region include pacific slope flycatcher (*Empidonax difficilis*), oak titmouse (*Baeolophus inornatus*), Bewick's wren (*Thryomanes bewickii*), acorn woodpeckers, and western bluebirds.

Given that the site is routinely maintained (mowed/disked) and is surrounded by intensive agriculture or actively maintained areas, wildlife use is likely limited with generally low wildlife values attributed to this site. The habitat on the project area does not support a significant amount of grassland or woodland habitat in the context of the great expanse of the interconnected and diverse habitat mosaic available to wildlife in the undeveloped areas in this region of northern San Luis Obispo County, it does provide relatively unobstructed movement opportunities through the grassland, oak woodland, and vineyard areas of the site.

5.3 WATERS OF THE U.S., WETLANDS, AND WATERS OF THE STATE

Visual inspection of the entire project site resulted in observations of two unnamed blueline drainages that potentially represent jurisdictional waters of the U.S./State. The southern drainage includes an earthen dam structure and impoundment that appears to have been historically used as a stock pond based on aerial review. The pond area was completely dry in December 2020 and showed no recent sign of ponding. Nonetheless, historic aerial review indicates this pond feature at least partially fills on a seasonal basis. As indicated in Figure 5, no new structures are proposed within these drainages, and existing road crossings would be utilized to access the proposed incidental camping sites and Winery Site # 2. As such, there are no Section 404/401 permits required from the Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) or Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB), and there is no Section 1600 Streambed Alteration Agreement (SAA) required from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW).

5.4 SPECIAL-STATUS SPECIES AND NATURAL COMMUNITIES OF SPECIAL CONCERN

Special-status species are those plants and animals listed, proposed for listing, or candidates for listing as threatened or endangered by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) or the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) under the federal Endangered Species Act (FESA); those considered "species of concern" by the USFWS; those listed or proposed for listing as rare, threatened, or endangered by the CDFW under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA); animals designated as "Species of Special Concern" by the CDFW; and plants occurring on lists 1B, 2, and 4 of the CNPS *Inventory of Rare and Endangered Vascular Plants of California.* Natural Communities of Special Concern are habitat types considered rare and worthy of tracking in the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB) by the CNPS and CDFW because of their limited distribution or historic loss over time.

The search and review of the CNDDB revealed 37 special-status species comprised of 17 special-status plants and 20 special-status wildlife species with recorded occurrences in the 10-mile search radius of the proposed project site. The following briefly describes or summarizes any potential special-status species issues and potential for occurrence on the project site. Table B-1 in Appendix B provides a list of special-status species recorded in the 10-mile CNDDB query and includes scientific and common names, listing status, and habitat requirements. Common names are used in text for ease of reading (see Table B-1 for scientific names). Figure CNDDB-1 in Appendix B includes a map of CNDDB special-status plant and wildlife species recorded occurrences respectively within approximately 10 miles of the project site.

5.4.1 Special-Status Botanical Resources

The CNDDB revealed the recorded occurrences of 17 special-status plant species within a ten-mile radius of the project site. None of these species are formally listed as rare, threatened or endangered. One is a CNPS rank 4, and the rest are CNPS rank 1.B species suggesting regional or statewide rarity. No rare, threatened, or endangered plant species or remnants thereof were observed within the project area during SII field survey. However, the survey was not conducted during the spring flowering period.

The special-status plant species occurrences recorded in the CNDDB are commonly associated with a specific soil type, native undisturbed habitat, moisture regime (e.g. wetland), and/or elevation range that dictates the range or microhabitat of the species. Additionally, the documented long-term cultivation and/or maintenance of the site significantly reduces the establishment of any native habitat to support the special-status plant species recorded in the region. Table B-1 in Appendix B provides the required habitat, or micro-habitat element for the special-status plants, supporting the findings that there would be no special-status plants expected to occur in the Study Area.

The perennial species bristlecone fir (*Abies bracteata*), mesa horkelia* (*Horkelia cuneata* var. *puberula*), Kellog's horkelia (*H. cuneata* var. *sericea*) would have been noticeable and identifiable throughout the year and were not observed during the SII rare plant surveys. Suitable habitat is also lacking onsite for these easily identifiable species.

Special-status plants recorded in the CNDDB associated with serpentine or specialized soils that are not expected to occur on the project site include Mile's milk-vetch (*Astragalus didymocarpus* var. *milesianus*), La Panza mariposa lilies* (*Calochortus obispoensis; C. simulans*), Lemmon's jewelflower* *(Caulanthus lemmonii),* Eastwood's larkspur* (*Delphinium parryi ssp. Eastwoodiae),* yellow flowered eriastrum* (*Eriastrum luteum*), and woodland wollythreads (*Monolopia gracilens*). No serpentine or clay soils are mapped or observed within the project area therefore, the site does not represent suitable habitat for these plant species.

The special-status plant species recorded in the CNDDB known from mesic/moist/wetland type habitats occurring in the region are the shining navarretia* (*Navarretia nigeliformis* ssp. *radians),* Jared's pepper-grass (*Lepidium jaredii* ssp. *jaredii*), oval-leaved snapdragon (*Antirrhinum ovatum*), spreading navarretia (*Navarretia fossalis*), and Santa Lucia dwarf rush* (*Juncus luciensis*). No mesic/moist/wetland habitats occur on the project site therefore, these species are not expected to occur.

Only marginal habitat within unmaintained grassland areas outside the proposed project footprint is present for the non-formally listed special-status species such as the dwarf calycadenia (*Calcadenia villosa*) and San Luis Obispo owl's-clover (*Castilleja densifllora* var. *obispoensis*). None were observed during the SII 2020 rare plant surveys.

None of the plant species described above were observed during the SII reconnaissance site visits.

5.4.2 SPECIAL-STATUS WILDLIFE

The CNDDB search revealed the recorded occurrences of 20 special-status wildlife species within the ten-mile search radius of the project site. Special-status wildlife species known from the region evaluated for this study are discussed below by groups based upon habitat preferences, specific habitat use requirements (i.e. terrestrial or aquatic), mobility, and migratory patterns.

Aquatic Species – The CNDDB has recorded occurrences for the California red-legged frog, western pond turtle, and western spadefoot toad and the vernal pool fairy shrimp within the ten-mile search range.

The western pond turtle and California red-legged frog are highly aquatic species found in lowlands and foothills in or near permanent sources of deep water with dense, shrubby, emergent or riparian vegetation, none of which occur on the project site. The seasonal stock pond feature is located within an ephemeral drainage feature and does not appear to support perennial or (near permanent) surface water. Typical emergent vegetation required for these species is also lacking. As such, the project site does not support suitable aquatic habitat for these species.

The vernal pool fairy shrimp and western spadefoot are closely associated with vernal pools or temporary pond/puddle habitats that are not subject to flowing water. Evidence of seasonal ponding was observed during SII field surveys or indicated on the review of multiple years of aerial photography. Although no activities are proposed within the stock pond or drainage areas, this feature supports limited seasonal aquatic habitat for these two species within the Study Area (vernal pool fairy shrimp are typically limited to static pools, not drainage corridors).

Insects – The Lompoc grasshopper (*Trimerotropis occulens)* is mostly associated with sandy soils in grassland, coastal scrub or chaparral habitats. No such habitat occurs on site and the Study Area is well

outside the known range of this species. The Atascadero June beetle (*Polyphylla nubila*) is known only from inland sand dunes that are not present on the project site (only gravelly loam soils) and would not occur. The Crotch bumble bee (*Bombus crotchii*) ranges throughout California to Baja typically found in wildflower rich grasslands and shrublands. The recent petition and decision to the California Fish and Game Commission to list the Crotch bumble bee under CESA has been leaglly challenged and a "stay" to the listing is in place at the time of report preparation. The local CNDDB record is an unspecified location from a 1959 collection. The project site is not wildflower rich and supports only scattered marginal habitat for this species in non-maintained areas.

Reptiles – The northern California legless lizard and coast horned lizard require undisturbed native habitats with suitable prey (insects/ants,) that do not occur on the cultivated/developed project site. As such, they are not expected to occur.

Fish – The CNDDB includes one occurrence for Monterey Hitch which is a species most often found in slow warm water, including lakes and quiet stretches of rivers. Hitch are sometimes found in cool and clear, low-gradient streams, hiding among aquatic vegetation in sandy runs or pools. The Study Area is outside the currently known range for this species and no suitable stream habitat is located onsite.

Birds – The CNDDB includes occurrences for wide-ranging resident and migratory bird species known from the region of the project site. The tricolored blackbird is locally nomadic but requires bulrush and cattail marsh or ponds for breeding that are not present on the project site. The least Bell's vireo is a breeding season migrant known from the Salinas River that requires dense riparian habitat that does not occur on the project site. As such, the project site does not support suitable habitat for these two species.

The wide ranging locally nomadic and migrant raptors listed in the CNDDB might use the site for very occasional foraging habitat depending on the cycle of cultivation and random nature of a flyover. This includes the golden eagle, ferruginous hawk (winter migrant), Swainson's hawk (breeding migrant), and prairie falcon. The Study Area site supports potential limited foraging and/or nesting opportunities for these wide-ranging species, as well as other more common raptors such as red-tailed hawk, red-shouldered hawk, barn owl, and great-horned owl.

Mammals – The American badger, Salinas pocket mouse, and Nelson's antelope squirrel are typically found in grasslands with friable soils for digging burrows. The site is west of the currently accepted range for the Nelson's antelope squirrel and Salinas pocket mouse (CNDDB occurrences are dated 1950 and 1918, respectively). The cultivated and developed areas of the site do not support suitable habitat for any of these mammal species. Limited suitable habitat for American badger is located within the disturbed annual grassland areas and along the edges (ecotone) of the oak woodland.

The pallid bat may occupy a variety of woodland, forest, and shrubland habitats. This species is highly sensitive to disturbance and typically roosts in rocky areas. No suitable habitat is located onsite for this species.

5.4.3 San Joaquin Kit Fox Habitat Evaluation

The project site was specifically evaluated for suitability to provide habitat for the San Joaquin kit fox which is a wide-ranging species known from northeastern and southeastern San Luis Obispo County. The SJKF occupies open country grassland, open scrubland, and oak savannah where there are friable soils for burrowing and an abundant rodent prey base. This small species of fox is known to use available ground squirrel or other existing burrows for den sites as they typically do not excavate their own dens. The developed / maintained project site itself does not support quality habitat as it is regularly tilled limiting burrowing animals and the establishment of a prey base.

The project site does fall within the agency established movement corridor linking the Camp Roberts subpopulation with the core population in the Carrizo Plains. As shown on map SJKF-1 in Appendix C, the Study Area falls within the SJKF corridor between the Carrizo Plain and Camp Roberts within 10 miles of several historic and a few more recent recorded occurrences. Most of the occurrences are on Camp Roberts where they have not been seen in many years (dates are shown next to the occurrences on Figure SJKF-1). The Chandler Ranch observations south of Highway 46 go back to the 1990's with no recent records of observations. There are 2014 observations of scat from a scent station study updating previous observations almost 10 miles to the east of the project site near Shandon.

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) requires the completion of the SJKF habitat evaluation form to evaluate potential impacts on the SJKF resulting from discretionary projects. The habitat evaluation form completed for this project site by SII is provided in Appendix C that shows a preliminary score of 76. Typically, scores above 50 require compensatory mitigation for the loss of habitat resulting from project implementation with scores in the 70's equating to a 3:1 ratio. The Study Area is within a 3:1 mitigation ratio area designated by the San Luis Obispo County's map of *Standard San Joaquin Kit Fox Mitigation Ratios*. The County in consultation with the CDFW will review the project site against the SJKF habitat evaluation form scoring and make a final determination of the appropriate ratio for project impact compensation for the loss of movement habitat within the corridor. No direct take (i.e. mortality, destruction of active dens, etc.) is allowed under the habitat mitigation fee program.

6.0 IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RECOMMENDED MITIGATION MEASURES

6.1 SUFFICIENCY OF BIOLOGICAL DATA

The SII field surveys in December 2020 and January 2021 are sufficient to; 1) adequately establish existing conditions of the project site and context in the landscape and land use mosaic; 2) determine the lack of special-status plant or wildlife species occurrence or suitable habitat for such species; 3) determine the extent of waters of the U.S./State onsite, and 4) adequately evaluate proposed project impacts. The data collected as articulated in this report provide sufficient biological resources information to adequately address potential significance of impacts on biological resources.

6.2 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The proposed project would result in temporary and permanent impacts to approximately 1.5 acres of highly disturbed non-native annual grassland to a developed winery facility, two incidental camping sites, and related facilities. The proposed disturbance areas do not support any native plant community and provides minimal habitat for locally common wildlife accustomed to agricultural or mowed/disked grasslands. No impacts to the blue oak woodland would be required, and retention of the trees would continue to provide nesting, foraging, and roosting habitat for resident and migratory birds as well as other common wildlife species.

No special-status plant or wildlife species were observed and are not expected to occur on the project site as there is no suitable habitat for any of these species. Vegetation removal (clearing and grubbing) during the nesting season for birds could result in the destruction of active bird's nests, including ground-nesting birds. Even unintended destruction of active nests is prohibited by the Fish and Game Code of California Sections 3503 and 3503.1 (raptors specifically). As such, this could be considered a potentially significant impact requiring mitigation to avoid take or destruction of active nests thereby reducing this potentially significant impact to a less than significant level.

The project is within the SJKF movement corridor between the Carrizo Plain core population and the Camp Roberts subpopulation. While there are abundant open lands through the area, the project could incrementally block or degrade potential SJKF movement through this corridor. The proposed project would permanently develop approximately 0.22 acres for the proposed winery site subject to County mitigation requirements. The remaining approximately 65.5 acres of annual grassland, 30 acres of vineyard, 16 acres of blue oak woodland, and the 1-acres stock pond would still allow unobstructed movement for SJKF through the area. Per the County guidelines, this loss of 0.22 acres of habitat movement opportunity for the SJKF is considered a potentially significant impact requiring a contribution to the long-term conservation of the movement corridor through the region as typical mitigation.

Given there is no formally-listed special-status plant or wildlife species habitat present on the site, impacts on general biological resources are considered to be less than significant with incorporation of the recommended mitigation measures in Section 5.2 below.

6.3 RECOMMENDED MITIGATION MEASURES

The following mitigation measures are recommended to reduce potentially significant impacts on nesting birds and the SJKF to a less than significant level.

To reduce any potentially significant impact on nesting birds from vegetation and tree removals, the following mitigation measures are recommended.

MM BIO-1: Vegetation removal and initial site disturbance shall be conducted between September 1st and January 31st outside of the nesting season for birds. If vegetation and/or tree removal is planned for the bird nesting season (February 1st to August 31st), then preconstruction nesting bird surveys shall be conducted by a qualified biologist to determine if any active nests would be impacted by project construction. If no active nests are found, then no further mitigation shall be required.

If any active nests are found that would be impacted by construction, then the nest sites shall be avoided with the establishment of a non-disturbance buffer zone around active nests as determined by a qualified biologist. Nest sites shall be avoided and protected with the non-disturbance buffer zone until the adults and young of the year are no longer reliant on the nest site for survival as determined by a qualified biologist. As such, avoiding disturbance or take of an active nest would reduce potential impacts on nesting birds to a less-than-significant level.

To reduce any potentially significant impact on the regional SJKF movement corridor, and avoid take of any SJKF from project construction, the following mitigation measures are recommended.

MM BIO-2: Prior to issuance of grading and/or construction permits, the applicant shall submit evidence to the County of San Luis Obispo that states that one or a combination of the following three San Joaquin kit fox compensatory mitigation measures has been implemented:

a. Provide for the protection in perpetuity, through acquisition of fee or a conservation easement of 0.66 acres (0.22 acres of development multiplied by 3 as a result of an applied 3:1 mitigation ratio) of suitable habitat in the kit fox corridor area (e.g.

within the San Luis Obispo County kit fox habitat area, northwest of Highway 58), either on-site or off-site, and provide for a non-wasting endowment to provide for management and monitoring of the property in perpetuity. Lands to be conserved shall be subject to the review and approval of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and the County. This mitigation alternative (a.) requires that all aspects if this program must be in place before County-permit issuance or initiation of any ground disturbing activities.

b. Deposit funds into an approved in-lieu fee program, which would provide for the protection in perpetuity of suitable habitat in the kit fox corridor area within San Luis Obispo County, and provide for a non-wasting endowment for management and monitoring of the property in perpetuity. Mitigation alternative (b) above can be completed by providing funds to The Nature Conservancy (TNC) pursuant to the Voluntary Fee-Based Compensatory Mitigation Program (Program). The Program was established in agreement between the CDFW and TNC to preserve San Joaquin kit fox habitat, and to provide a voluntary mitigation alternative to project proponents who must mitigate the impacts of projects in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The fee, payable to "The Nature Conservancy," would total: $1,650 (0.22 x 3 x $2,500).

   This fee is calculated based on the current cost-per-unit of $2500 per acre of mitigation, which is scheduled to be adjusted to address the increasing cost of property in San Luis Obispo County; actual cost may increase depending on the timing of payment. This fee must be paid after the CDFW provides written notification about your mitigation options but prior to County permit issuance and initiation of any ground disturbing activities.

c. Purchase credits in a CDFW-approved conservation bank, which would provide for the protection in perpetuity of suitable habitat within the kit fox corridor area and provide for a non-wasting endowment for management and monitoring of the property in perpetuity. Mitigation alternative (c) above can be completed by purchasing credits from the Palo Prieto Conservation Bank (see contact information below). The Palo Prieto Conservation Bank was established to preserve San Joaquin kit fox habitat, and to provide a voluntary mitigation alternative to project proponents who must mitigate the impacts of projects in accordance with CEQA. The cost for purchasing credits is payable to the owners of The Palo Prieto Conservation Bank, would total: $1,650 (0.22 x 3 x $2,500).

   This fee is calculated based on the current cost-per-credit of $2,500 per acre of mitigation. The fee is established by the conservation bank owner and may change at any time. Actual cost may increase depending on the timing of payment. Purchase of credits must be completed prior to County permit issuance and initiation of any ground disturbing activities.

MM BIO-3: To avoid direct take of SJKF during construction in accordance with the San Luis Obispo County Guide to SJKF Mitigation Procedures Under CEQA, the project owner shall adopt the Standard Kit Fox CEQA Mitigation Measures and shall be included on development plans. The following measures shall be implemented:

- A maximum 25 mph speed limit shall be required at the project site during construction activities.
- All construction activities shall cease at dusk and not start before dawn.
- A qualified biologist shall be on-site immediately prior to initiation of project activities to inspect for any large burrows (e.g., known and potential dens) and to ensure no wildlife are injured during project activities. If dens are encountered, they should be avoided as discussed below.
- Exclusion zone boundaries shall be established around all known and potential kit fox dens.
- All excavations deeper than 2 feet shall be completely covered at the end of each working day.
- All pipes, culverts, or similar structures shall be inspected for SJKF and other wildlife before burying, capping, or moving.
- All exposed openings of pipes, culverts, or similar structures shall be capped or temporarily sealed prior to the end of each working day.
- All food-related trash shall be removed from the site at the end of each workday.
- Project-related equipment shall be prohibited outside of designated work areas and access routes.
- No firearms shall be allowed in the project area.
- Disturbance to burrows shall be avoided to the greatest extent feasible.
- No rodenticides or herbicides should be applied in the project area.
- Permanent fences shall allow for SJKF passage through or underneath (i.e., an approximate 4-inch passage gap shall remain at ground level).
- Prior to issuance of grading and/or construction permit and within 30 days prior to initiation of site disturbance and/or construction, all personnel associated with the project shall attend a worker education training program, conducted by a qualified biologist, to avoid or reduce impacts on sensitive biological resources (i.e. San Joaquin kit fox). At a minimum, as the program relates to the kit fox, the training shall include the kit fox's life history, all mitigation measures specified by the County, as well as any related biological report(s) prepared for the project. The applicant shall notify the County shortly prior to this meeting. A kit fox fact sheet shall also be developed prior to the training program, and distributed at the training program to all contractors, employers and other personnel involved with the construction of the project.
- During the site-disturbance and/or construction phase, any contractor or employee that inadvertently kills or injures a San Joaquin kit fox or who finds any such animal either dead, injured, or entrapped shall be required to report the incident immediately to the applicant and County.
- In the event that any observations are made of injured or dead kit fox, the applicant shall immediately notify the USFWS and CDFW by telephone. In addition, formal notification shall be provided in writing within three working days of the finding of any such animal(s). Notification shall include the date, time, location and circumstances of the incident. Any threatened or endangered species found dead or injured shall be turned over immediately to CDFW for care, analysis, or disposition.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings described above establishing the existing conditions of biological resources within the project site, and incorporation of the recommended mitigation measures, implementation of the proposed project would not result in any substantial adverse effects on biological, botanical, or wetland habitat resources. Therefore, with mitigation measures incorporated into the project, direct and indirect project impacts on biological resources would be considered to be less than significant.

8.0 REFERENCES

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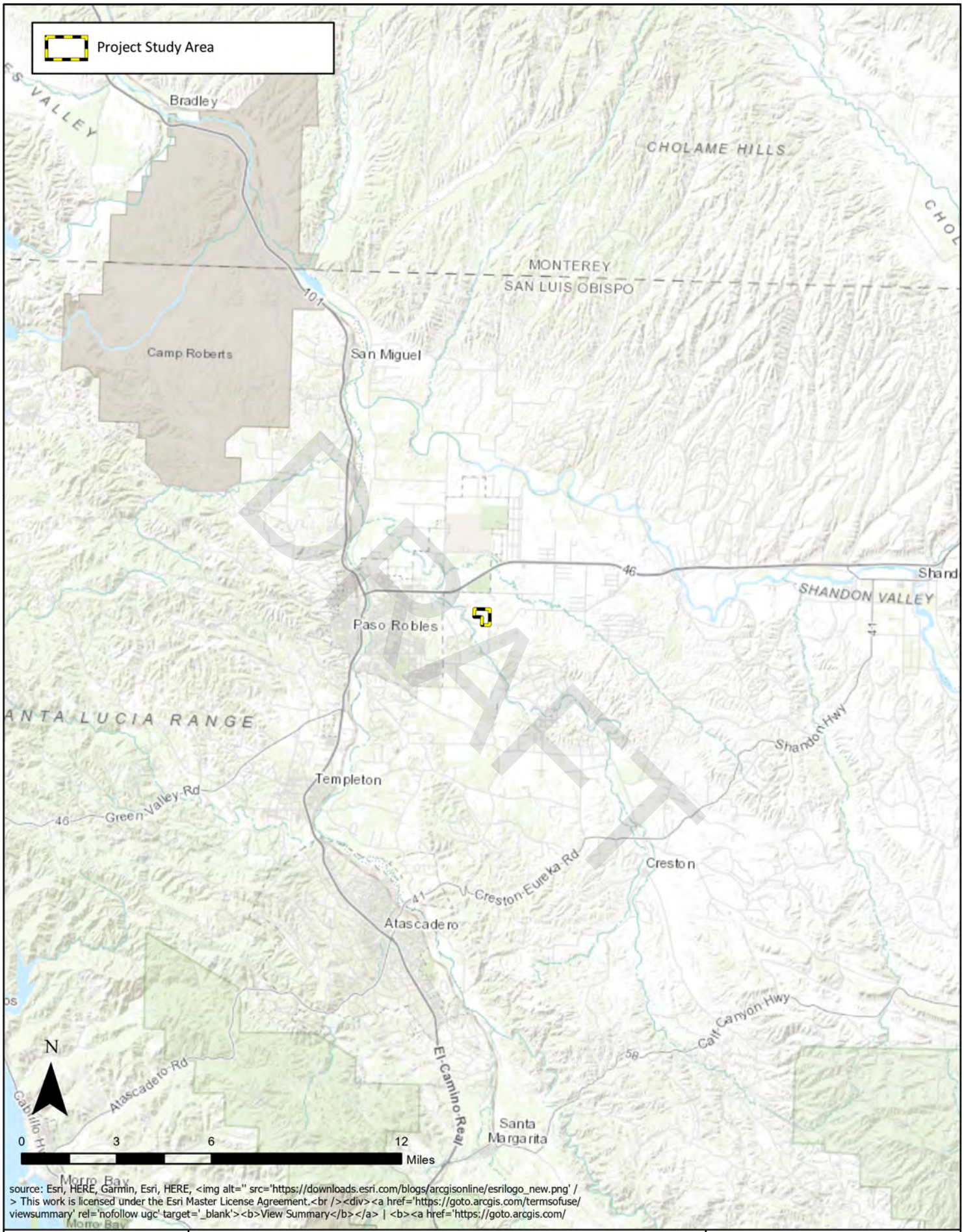
APPENDIX A

FIGURES



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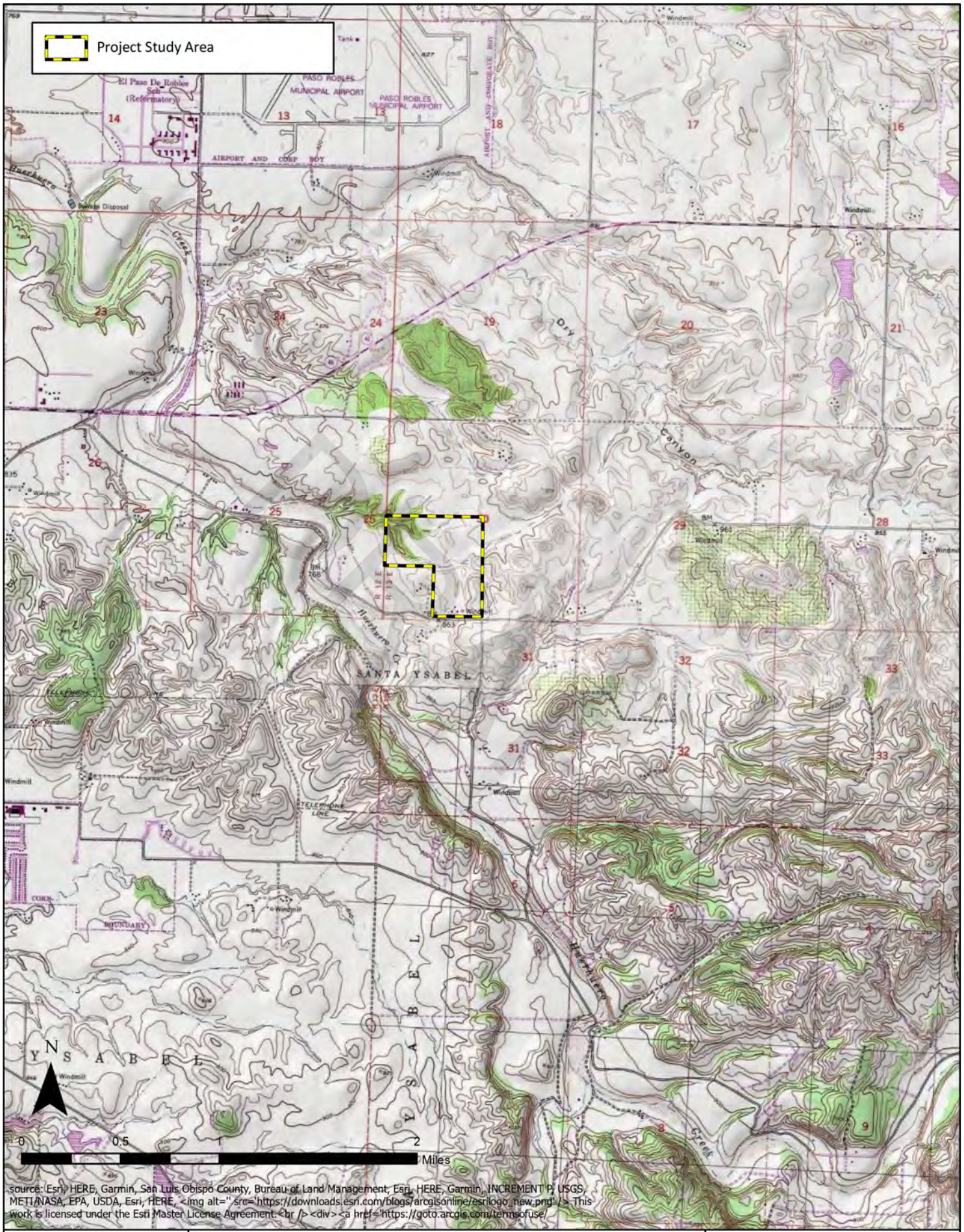
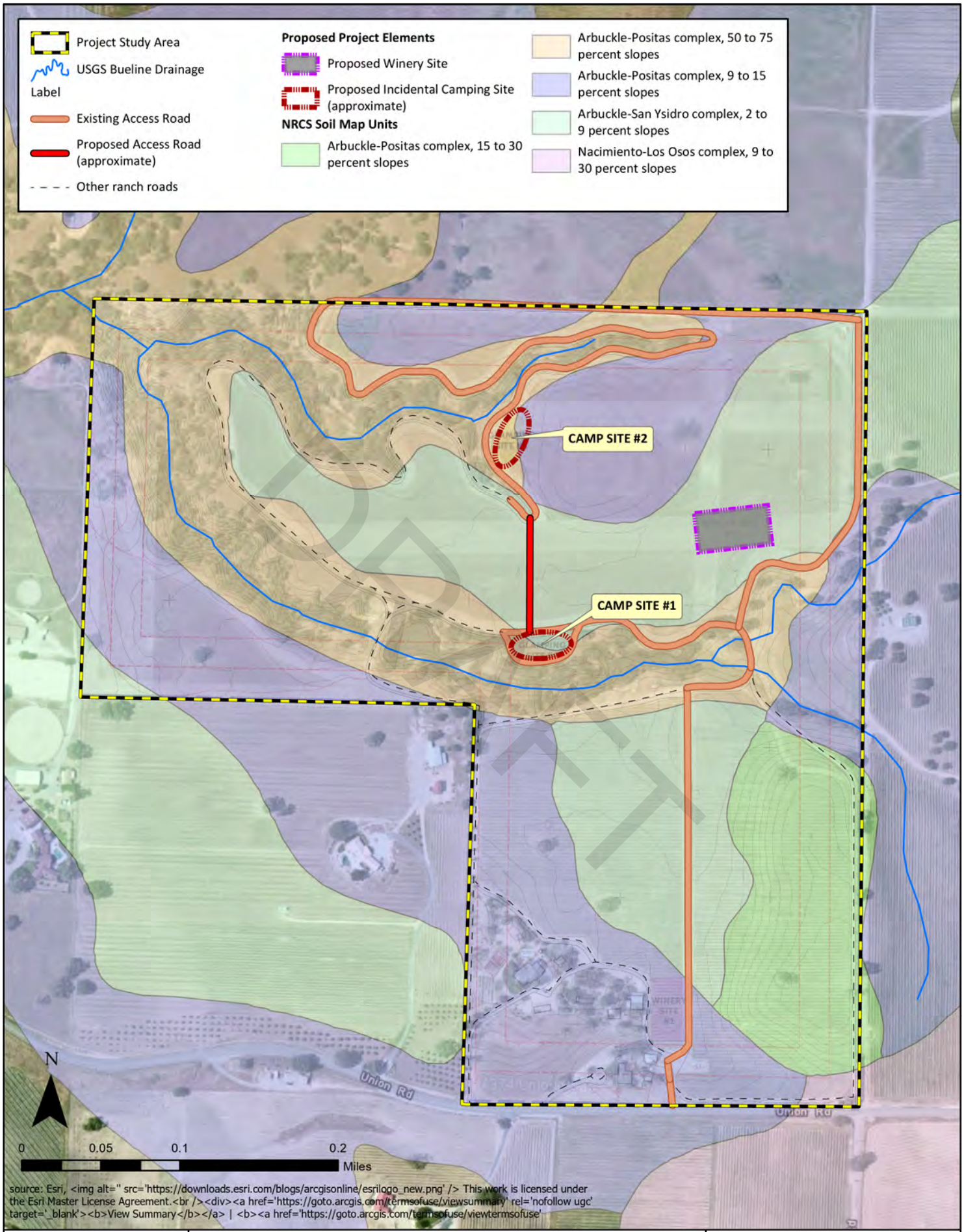
sage institute January 6, 2021	**Vinyl Vineyards, 4374 Union Road**	**Figure 1**
	BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES ASSESSMENT	Regional Location Map

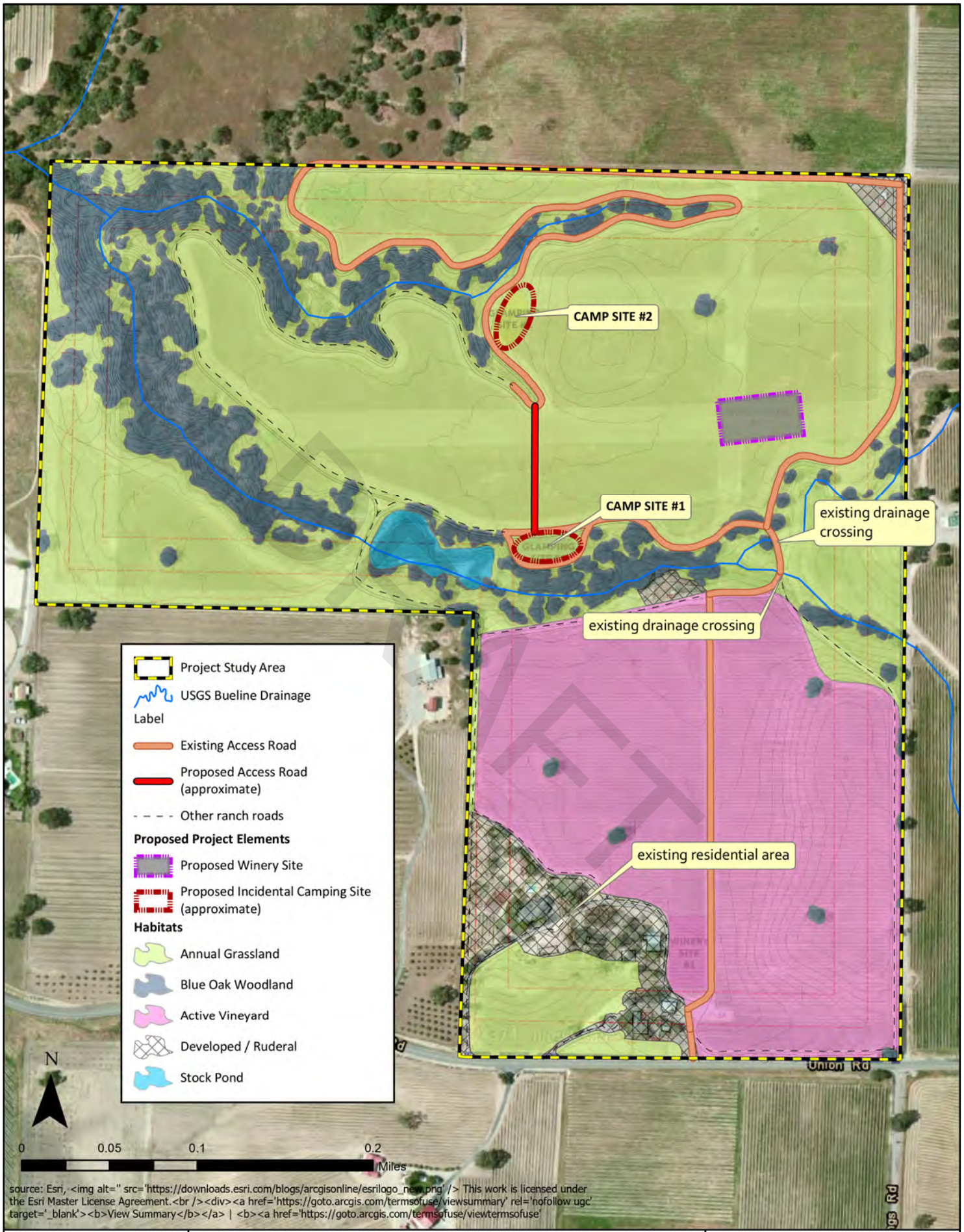


sage institute January 6, 2021	**Vinyl Vineyards, 4374 Union Road**	**Figure 2**
	BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES ASSESSMENT	USGS QUAD Map

sage institute January 6, 2021	**Vinyl Vineyards, 4374 Union Road**	**Figure 3**
	BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES ASSESSMENT	Aerial Vicinity Map



sage institute January 22, 2021	**Vinyl Vineyards, 4374 Union Road**	**Figure 4**
	BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES ASSESSMENT	USDA Soil Mapping Units



sage institute January 22, 2021	**Vinyl Vineyards, 4374 Union Road**	**Figure 5**
	BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES ASSESSMENT	Habitat Map

Photo 1: View east at mowed non-native annual grassland habitat at proposed Glamping Site #1.

Photo 2: View west at mowed non-native annual grassland habitat at proposed Glamping Site #1.

Photo 3: View north at typical existing access road and existing drainage culverts.

Photo 4: View west at disked non-native annual grassland habitat at proposed Winery Site #2.

FIGURE 6: REPRESENTATIVE SITE PHOTOS (December 2020)

Photo 5: View east at disked non-native annual grassland habitat at proposed Winery Site #2.

Photo 6: View south at non-native annual grassland habitat at proposed Glamping Site #2 and existing access road.

Photo 7: View west at non-native annual grassland and typical adjacent oak woodland habitat at proposed Glamping Site #2.

FIGURE 6: REPRESENTATIVE SITE PHOTOS (December 2020)

Photo 8: Typical view of blue oak woodland habitat.

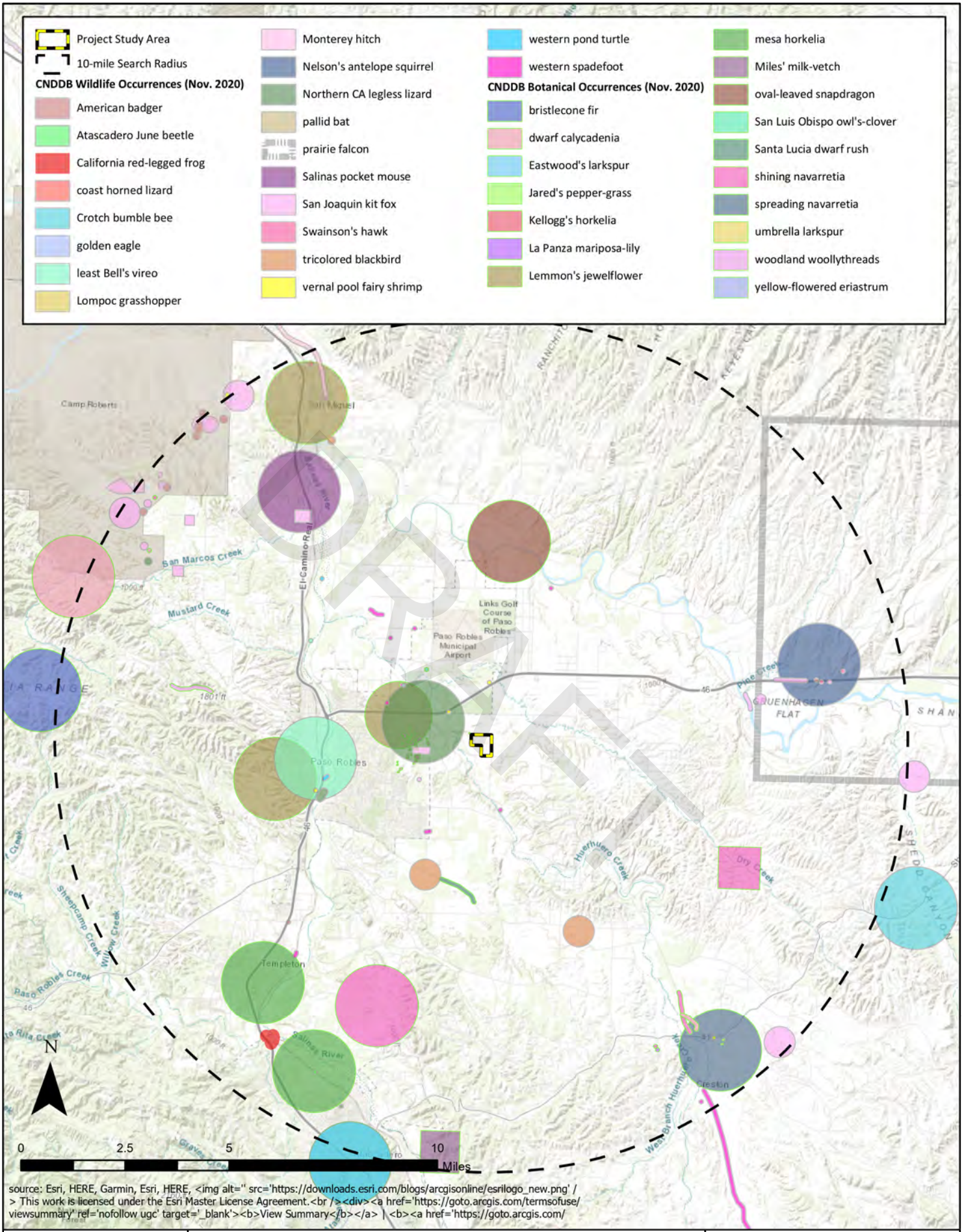
Photo 9: View east at dry stock pond area.

FIGURE 6: REPRESENTATIVE SITE PHOTOS (December 2020)

APPENDIX B

CNDDB DATA

CNDDB-1: CNDDB OCCURRENCES MAP (10-MILE SEARCH RADIUS)
TABLE B-1: CNDDB SPECIAL-STATUS SPECIES



sage institute
January 6, 2021

Vinyl Vineyards, 4374 Union Road	CNDDB-1
BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES ASSESSMENT	10-mile CNDDB Occurrences

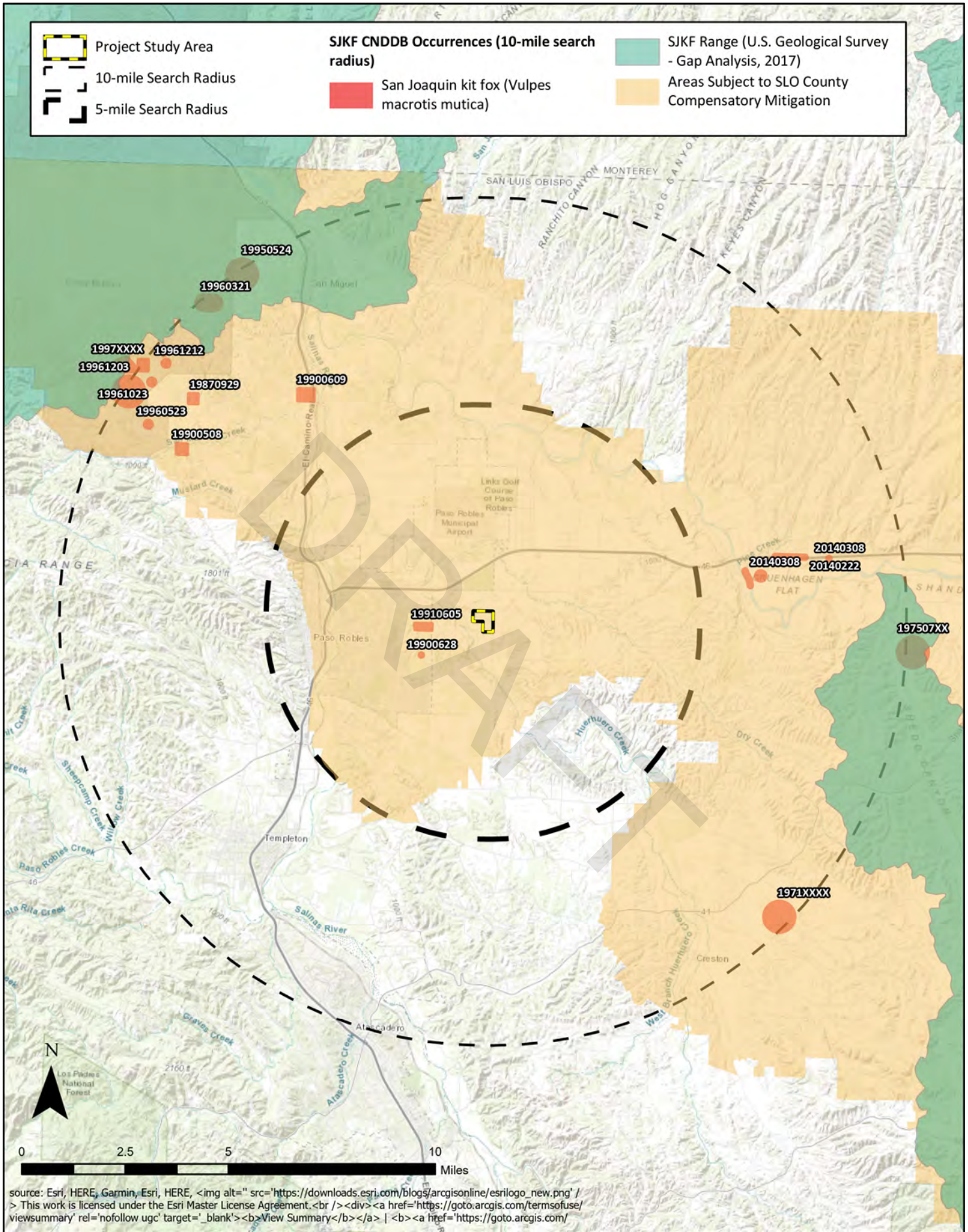
Common Name	Scientific Name	Federal Status	State Status	Srank	CNPS Rare Plant Rank	General Habitat Requirements	Micro Habitat Requirements	# of Occurrences w/in 10-miles	Potential to Occur in Study Area
Amphibians									
California red-legged frog	Rana draytonii	Threatened	SSC	S2S3	--	Lowlands and foothills in or near permanent sources of deep water with dense, shrubby or emergent riparian vegetation.	Requires 11-20 weeks of permanent water for larval development. Must have access to estivation habitat.	2	low
western spadefoot	Spea hammondii	None	SSC	S3	--	Occurs primarily in grassland habitats, but can be found in valley-foothill hardwood woodlands.	Vernal pools are essential for breeding and egg-laying.	10	moderate
Reptiles									
coast horned lizard	Phrynosoma blainvillii	None	SSC	S3S4	--	Frequents a wide variety of habitats, most common in lowlands along sandy washes with scattered low bushes.	Open areas for sunning, bushes for cover, patches of loose soil for burial, and abundant supply of ants and other insects.	1	low
Northern California legless lizard	Anniella pulchra	None	SSC	S3	--	Sandy or loose loamy soils under sparse vegetation.	Soil moisture is essential. They prefer soils with a high moisture content.	5	low
western pond turtle	Emys marmorata	None	SSC	S3	--	A thoroughly aquatic turtle of ponds, marshes, rivers, streams and irrigation ditches, usually with aquatic vegetation, below 6000 ft elevation.	Needs basking sites and suitable (sandy banks or grassy open fields) upland habitat up to 0.5 km from water for egg-laying.	2	low
Birds									
golden eagle	Aquila chrysaetos	None	FP	S3	--	Rolling foothills, mountain areas, sage-juniper flats, and desert.	Cliff-walled canyons provide nesting habitat in most parts of range; also, large trees in open areas.	1	low; foraging only
least Bell's vireo	Vireo bellii pusillus	Endangered	Endangered	S2	--	Summer resident of Southern California in low riparian in vicinity of water or in dry river bottoms; below 2000 ft.	Nests placed along margins of bushes or on twigs projecting into pathways, usually willow, Baccharis, mesquite.	2	none
prairie falcon	Falco mexicanus	None	None	S4	--	Inhabits dry, open terrain, either level or hilly.	Breeding sites located on cliffs. Forages far afield, even to marshlands and ocean shores.	2	low; foraging only
Swainson's hawk	Buteo swainsoni	None	Threatened	S3	--	Breeds in grasslands with scattered trees, juniper-sage flats, riparian areas, savannahs, & agricultural or ranch lands with groves or lines of trees.	Requires adjacent suitable foraging areas such as grasslands, or alfalfa or grain fields supporting rodent populations.	2	low
tricolored blackbird	Agelaius tricolor	None	Threatened; SSC	S1S2	--	Highly colonial species, most numerous in Central Valley & vicinity. Largely endemic to California.	Requires open water, protected nesting substrate, and foraging area with insect prey within a few km of the colony.	3	none
Crustaceans									
vernal pool fairy shrimp	Branchinecta lynchi	Threatened	None	S3	--	Endemic to the grasslands of the Central Valley, Central Coast mountains, and South Coast mountains, in astatic rain-filled pools.	Inhabit small, clear-water sandstone-depression pools and grassed swale, earth slump, or basalt-flow depression pools.	5	none
Fish									
Monterey hitch	Lavinia exilicauda harengus	None	SSC	S2S4	--			1	none
Insects									
Atascadero June beetle	Polyphylla nubila	None	None	S1	--	Known only from inland sand dunes in San Luis Obispo County.		3	none
Crotch bumble bee	Bombus crotchii	None	Candidate Endangered	S1S2	--	Coastal California east to the Sierra-Cascade crest and south into Mexico.	Food plant genera include Antirrhinum, Phacelia, Clarkia, Dendromecon, Eschscholzia, and Eriogonum.	2	none
Lompoc grasshopper	Trimerotropis occulens	None	None	S1S2	--	Known only from Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo counties.		1	none
Mammals									
American badger	Taxidea taxus	None	SSC	S3	--	Most abundant in drier open stages of most shrub, forest, and herbaceous habitats, with friable soils.	Needs sufficient food, friable soils and open, uncultivated ground. Preys on burrowing rodents. Digs burrows.	6	low
Nelson's antelope squirrel	Ammospermophilus nelsoni	None	Threatened	S2S3	--	Western San Joaquin Valley from 200-1200 ft elev. On dry, sparsely vegetated loam soils.	Dig burrows or use k-rat burrows. Need widely scattered shrubs, forbs and grasses in broken terrain with gullies and washes.	1	none
pallid bat	Antrozous pallidus	None	SSC	S3	--	Deserts, grasslands, shrublands, woodlands and forests. Most common in open, dry habitats with rocky areas for roosting.	Roosts must protect bats from high temperatures. Very sensitive to disturbance of roosting sites.	1	none
Salinas pocket mouse	Perognathus inornatus psammophilus	None	SSC	S1	--	Annual grassland and desert shrub communities in the Salinas Valley.	Fine-textured, sandy, friable soils. Burrows for cover and nesting.	1	none
San Joaquin kit fox	Vulpes macrotis mutica	Endangered	Threatened	S2	--	Annual grasslands or grassy open stages with scattered shrubby vegetation.	Need loose-textured sandy soils for burrowing, and suitable prey base.	17	low
Gymnosperms									
bristlecone fir	Abies bracteata	None	None	S2S3	1B.3	Lower montane coniferous forest, broadleafed upland forest, chaparral, riparian woodland.	Rocky sites in Monterey and San Luis Obispo counties. Sometimes serpentine. 150-1465 m.	1	none
Monocots									
La Panza mariposa-lily	Calochortus simulans	None	None	S2	1B.3	Valley and foothill grassland, cismontane woodland, chaparral, lower montane coniferous forest.	Decomposed granite, or sometimes on serpentine. 150-1160 m.	1	none
Santa Lucia dwarf rush	Juncus luciensis	None	None	S3	1B.2	Vernal pools, meadows and seeps, lower montane coniferous forest, chaparral, Great Basin scrub.	Vernal pools, ephemeral drainages, wet meadow habitats and streamsides. 280-2035 m.	2	none
Dicots									
dwarf calycadenia	Calycadenia villosa	None	None	S3	1B.1	Chaparral, cismontane woodland, valley and foothill grassland, meadows and seeps.	Open, dry meadows, hillsides, gravelly outwashes. 240-1350 m.	4	none
Eastwood's larkspur	Delphinium parryi ssp. eastwoodiae	None	None	S2	1B.2	Chaparral, valley and foothill grassland.	Serpentine. Openings. 60-640 m.	1	none

Common Name	Scientific Name	Federal Status	State Status	Srank	CNPS Rare Plant Rank	General Habitat Requirements	Micro Habitat Requirements	# of Occurrences w/in 10-miles	Potential to Occur in Study Area
Jared's pepper-grass	Lepidium jaredii ssp. jaredii	None	None	S1S2	1B.2	Valley and foothill grassland.	Alkali flats and sinks. Sandy, alkaline, sometimes adobe soils. 335-1005 m.	1	none
Kellogg's horkelia	Horkelia cuneata var. sericea	None	None	S1?	1B.1	Closed-cone coniferous forest, coastal scrub, coastal dunes, chaparral.	Old dunes, coastal sandhills; openings. Sandy or gravelly soils. 5-430 m.	1	none
Lemmon's jewelflower	Caulanthus lemmonii	None	None	S3	1B.2	Pinyon and juniper woodland, valley and foothill grassland.	75-1585 m.	3	none
mesa horkelia	Horkelia cuneata var. puberula	None	None	S1	1B.1	Chaparral, cismontane woodland, coastal scrub.	Sandy or gravelly sites. 15-1645 m.	3	none
Miles' milk-vetch	Astragalus didymocarpus var. milesianus	None	None	S2	1B.2	Coastal scrub.	Clay soils. 50-385 m.	1	none
oval-leaved snapdragon	Antirrhinum ovatum	None	None	S3	4.2	Chaparral, cismontane woodland, pinyon and juniper woodland, valley and foothill grassland.	From open hillsides to small vernal pools in clay or gypsum soils w/in grassland or woodland. Sites often alkaline. 200-1000 m.	1	none
San Luis Obispo owl's-clover	Castilleja densiflora var. obispoensis	None	None	S2	1B.2	Valley and foothill grassland, meadows and seeps.	Sometimes on serpentine. 9-485 m.	1	none
shining navarretia	Navarretia nigelliformis ssp. radians	None	None	S2	1B.2	Cismontane woodland, valley and foothill grassland, vernal pools.	Apparently in grassland, and not necessarily in vernal pools. 60-975 m.	9	none
spreading navarretia	Navarretia fossalis	Threatened	None	S2	1B.1	Vernal pools, chenopod scrub, marshes and swamps, playas.	San Diego hardpan and San Diego claypan vernal pools; in swales & vernal pools, often surrouded by other habitat types. 15-850 m.	1	none
umbrella larkspur	Delphinium umbraculorum	None	None	S3	1B.3	Cismontane woodland, chaparral.	Mesic sites. 215-2075 m.	1	none
woodland woollythreads	Monolopia gracilens	None	None	S3	1B.2	Chaparral, valley and foothill grassland, cismontane woodland, broadleafed upland forest, North Coast coniferous forest.	Grassy sites, in openings; sandy to rocky soils. Often seen on serpentine after burns, but may have only weak affinity to serpentine. 120-975 m.	1	none
yellow-flowered eriastrum	Eriastrum luteum	None	None	S2	1B.2	Broadleafed upland forest, cismontane woodland, chaparral.	On bare sandy decomposed granite slopes. 240-580 m.	1	none

APPENDIX C

SAN JOAQUIN KIT FOX DATA

SJKF-1: SJKF OCCURRENCES MAP (10-MILE SEARCH RADIUS)
SJKF HABITAT EVALUATION FORM



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sage institute January 6, 2021	**Vinyl Vineyards, 4374 Union Road**	**SJKF-1**
	BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES ASSESSMENT	10-mile SJKF CNDDB Occurrences

San Joaquin Kit Fox Habitat Evaluation Form

Cover Sheet

Project Name: **Date**: 01/06/2021

Vinyl Vineyards, 4374 Union Road

Project Location*:

*Include project vicinity map and project boundary on copy of U.S.G.S. 7.5 minute map (size may be reduced)

See Appendix A

U.S.G.S. Quad Map Name: Estrella

Lat/Long or UTM coordinates (if available): 120.6177115°W 35.6355288°N

Project Description:

Construction of a winery site and two glamping sites.

Project Size Acres Amount of Kit Fox Habitat Affected Acres

Quantity of WHR Habitat Types Impacted (i.e. - 2 acres annual grassland, 3 acres blue oak woodland)

WHR type Non-native Annual Grassland Acres 66.8

WHR type Vineyard Acres 30.0

Comments:

San Joaquin Kit Fox Habitat Evaluation Form

Form Completed By: Jason Kirschenstein, Principal Biologist, Sage Institute, Inc.

Is the project area within 10 miles of a recorded San Joaquin kit fox observation or within contiguous suitable habitat as defined in question 2 (A-E)

Yes – Continue with evaluation form
No – Evaluation form/surveys are not necessary

1. Importance of the project area relative to Recovery Plan for Upland Species of the San Joaquin Valley, California (Williams et al., 1998)

   A. Project would block or degrade an existing corridor linking core populations or isolate a subpopulation (20)
   B. Project is within core population (15)
   C. Project area is identified within satellite populations (12)
   D. Project area is within a corridor linking satellite populations (10)
   E. Project area is not within any of the previously described areas but is within known kit fox range (5)

2. Habitat characteristics of project area.

   A. Annual grassland or saltbush scrub present >50% of site (15)
   B. Grassland or saltbush scrub present but comprises<50% of project area (10)
   C. Oak savannah present on >50% of site (8)
   D. Fallow ag fields or grain/alfalfa crops (7)
   E. Orchards/vineyards (5)
   F. Intensively maintained row crops orsuitable vegetation absent (0)

3. Isolation of project area.

   A. Project area surrounded by contiguous kit fox habitat as described in Question 2a-e (15)
   B. Project area adjacent to at least 40 acres of contiguous habitat or part of an existing corridor (10)
   C. Project area adjacent to <40 acres of habitat but linked by existing corridor (i.e., river, canal, aqueduct) (7)
   D. Project area surrounded by ag but less than 200 yards from habitat (5)
   E. Project area completely isolated by row crops or development and is greater than 200 yards from potential habitat(0)

4. Potential for increased mortality as a result of project implementation. Mortality may come from direct (e.g., - construction related) or indirect (e.g., - vehicle strikes due to increases inpost development traffic) sources.

   A. Increased mortality likely (10)
   B. Unknown mortality effects (5)
   C. No long term effect onmortality (0)

5. Amount of potential kit fox habitat affected.

A. >320 acres (10)
B. 160 - 319 acres (7)
C. 80 - 159 acres (5)
D. 40 - 79 acres (3)
E. < 40 acres (1)

6. Results of project implementation.

A. Project site will be permanently converted and will no longer support foxes (10)
B. Project area will be temporarily impacted but will require periodic disturbance for ongoing maintenance (7)
C. Project area will be temporarily impacted and no maintenance necessary (5)
D. Project will result in changes to agricultural crops (2)
E. No habitat impacts (0)

7. Project Shape

A. Large Block (10)
B. Linear with > 40 foot right-of-way (5)
C. Linear with < 40 foot right-of-way (3)

8. Have San Joaquin kit foxes been observed within 3 miles of the project area within the last 10 years?

A. Yes (10)
B. No (0)

Scoring

1.	Recovery importance	20
2.	Habitat condition	15
3.	Isolation	15
4.	Mortality	5
5.	Quantity of habitat impacted	1
6.	Project results	10
7.	Project shape	10
8.	Recent observations	0
	TOTAL	**76**