



COUNTY OF SAN BENITO
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AGENCY
NOTICE OF PREPARATION

Date: July 21, 2023
To: Responsible Agencies, Trustee Agencies, and Other Interested Parties
Subject: Notice of Preparation of an Environmental Impact Report for the Ranch 35 Quarry Project
Lead Agency: San Benito County
From: San Benito County Resource Management Agency
Attn.: Arielle Goodspeed, Principal Planner
2301 Technology Parkway
Hollister, CA 95023

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that San Benito County (County) will serve as the Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) in preparing an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the proposed Ranch 35 Quarry Project (Project) submitted to the County by Stevens Creek Quarry, Inc. (Applicant).

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15082, the County has issued this Notice of Preparation (NOP) to provide responsible agencies, trustee agencies, and other interested parties information about the Project, advise of the County's intent to prepare an EIR for the Project, and invite agencies and interested parties to provide input to the County on the scope of issues to be addressed in the EIR. Responsible and trustee agencies will need to use the EIR prepared by the County when considering issuance of permits or other approvals for the Project, and the County is requesting input on the scope and content of the environmental information germane to each commenting agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the Project.

PUBLIC REVIEW PERIOD: Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15082(b), this NOP is available for a 30-day public review and comment period during which the County will receive comments on the scope of the EIR. The review and comment period begins **July 21, 2023**, and ends on **August 21, 2023**. Responses must be sent at the earliest possible date, but no later than the end of the 30-day comment period. Comment submittal information is provided at the end of this NOP.

PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING: The County Resource Management Agency (RMA) and the County Planning Commission will hold a public scoping meeting for the Project on **Wednesday, August 2, 2023, at 6 PM**. The scoping meeting will include a presentation providing an overview of the Project and environmental review process and will invite public input on the scope of the EIR analysis. Responsible agencies, trustee agencies, and members of the public are invited to attend the meeting and provide oral comments on the scope of the EIR.

Date and Time: August 2, 2023, at 6 PM

Location: Administration - Board of Supervisors Chambers
481 Fourth Street, 1st Floor
Hollister, California 95023

Virtual Participation: The public may also join this meeting using Zoom by visiting the web address:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83692916890?pwd=Vmt3bWc4UTdjL25ZTml2TldKN2Fydz09>

or dialing one of the following telephone numbers:

+1 408 638 0968 US (San Jose) or +1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose).

To access the meeting, please enter the Webinar ID and Passcode:

Webinar ID: 836 9291 6890

Passcode: 136452

PROJECT LOCATION: The Project site is located at 991 San Juan Highway in San Juan Batista, California. As shown in the attached location figure, the site is located immediately east of the U.S. 101/Highway 156 interchange and two miles northwest of the City of San Juan Batista in unincorporated, northwestern San Benito County. The Project site is identified as assessor's parcel number 012-090-023 and has a general plan designation of Agricultural and zoning designation of Agriculture Productive.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The Applicant is seeking approval of a use permit and reclamation plan from the County. The Project seeks entitlements to develop, operate, and ultimately reclaim the Ranch 35 Quarry, a new aggregate mining and processing operation. SCQ currently operates the Williams Quarry (1275 Anzar Road), located just northeast of the Project site. Operations at the Williams Quarry have been ongoing for over 35 years. The Project is intended to ultimately replace the existing Williams Quarry where aggregate reserves are now diminished.

Project operations would include mining, processing, and materials recycling operations. Mining would occur in phases over an anticipated 75-year period with maximum annual sales not to exceed 1 million tons. Site operations would involve development of the quarry area, installation of processing plant facilities, and gradual development of topsoil, overburden, and long-term material stockpiles on an approximately 204 acres of the 271-acre parcel. The primary quarry area would be located within the central, southern, and northern portions of the parcel. Mining operations would involve vegetation removal, stripping and stockpiling of topsoil and overburden, and aggregate removal. Aggregate removal would use mobile equipment to create a working bench which is extended laterally to the proposed mining limit. Successive vertical benches would then be developed as the quarry mines downward. Drilling and blasting to break up aggregate material for excavation is not proposed.

After excavation, mined aggregate would be loaded into haul trucks and transported to the processing plant south of the active pit via an internal access road. Processing of aggregate would include the use of crushers, screens, and conveyors to reduce the size of the aggregate material and sort and stockpile the processed aggregate. In addition, recycle materials generated from local infrastructure and general construction demolition sites would be trucked into the site. A recycle plant capable of crushing asphalt concrete, broken Portland Cement Concrete, and a combination of asphalt and Portland Cement Concrete would be located in the processing plant area. The Project does not propose construction and operation of an asphalt plant or ready-mix concrete plant.

Portable buildings and structures that provide ancillary support to ongoing mining and processing activities would include an office, truck scale, scale house, equipment yard, maintenance building,

and storage. Site operations would employ approximately 25 people. Table 1, “Hours of Operation,” provides the sites operating hours based on activity.

Table 1–Hours of Operation

Site Activity	Hours/Days of Operation
Quarry Mining	6:30 am – 5 pm, Monday–Saturday
Processing Plant	6:30 am – 5 pm, Monday–Saturday
Truck Queuing and Material Load-Out	4:00 am – 5 pm, Monday–Saturday

To accommodate Caltrans and other public agency projects, the truck queuing and material load out could temporarily extend to 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for specific public infrastructure and emergency/time sensitive construction projects.

Traffic would enter and exit the Project site via a private access road connecting with State Highway 156. Access to the property would be controlled by a gate at the entrance point and closed and locked whenever the quarry is not in active operation.

Upon completion of the proposed mining, all mining equipment and ancillary structures would be removed, and the site would be reclaimed as grazing land. The quarry may be partially backfilled with fill materials and revegetated. Revegetation would include reseeding the site using a grazing seed mix consistent with the undisturbed vegetative cover surrounding the site. The primary access road from the southern boundary into the processing plant area, and internal access road from the processing plant area to the quarry, would remain for post-mining land use access.

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES: In preparing the EIR, the County will assess the potential for the Project to result in significant impacts associated with the resources and subtopics identified in Appendix G, “Environmental Checklist,” of CEQA Guidelines as well as other issues of environmental concern that may be identified during scoping and preparation of the EIR.

The EIR will include evaluation of potential impacts associated with the following resource topics:

- Aesthetics
- Agriculture/Forestry Resources
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Energy
- Geology and Soils
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Noise
- Transportation
- Tribal Cultural Resources
- Wildfire

At this time, the County anticipates the Project will not have a significant impact on the resource topics listed below and will include a brief explanation of this conclusion. The EIR will include a full evaluation of one or more of these resource topics if a potential significant impact is identified in the course of preparing the EIR.

- Mineral Resources
- Population and Housing
- Public Services
- Recreation
- Utilities and Service Systems

COMMENTING ON THE SCOPE OF THE EIR

The County is requesting input from agencies and other interested parties on the scope and content of the environmental information appropriate to each agency's statutory responsibilities or of interest to an individual or organization. Specifically, the County is requesting the following:

1. Identify significant environmental effects and mitigation measures that you believe need to be explored in the EIR with supporting discussion of why you believe these effects may be significant;
2. Describe technical studies and other information that you believe are necessary for the County to analyze the potential significant environmental effects, alternatives, and mitigation measures you have identified;
3. For public agencies that provide infrastructure and public services, identify any facilities or improvements that will be required to provide services to the Project;
4. Indicate whether staff from your agency would like to meet with County staff to discuss the scope and content of the EIR's environmental documentation;
5. Provide the name, title, and contact information for the designated person from your agency or organization that we can contact regarding your comments; and
6. Identify alternatives that you believe need to be explored in further detail in the EIR.

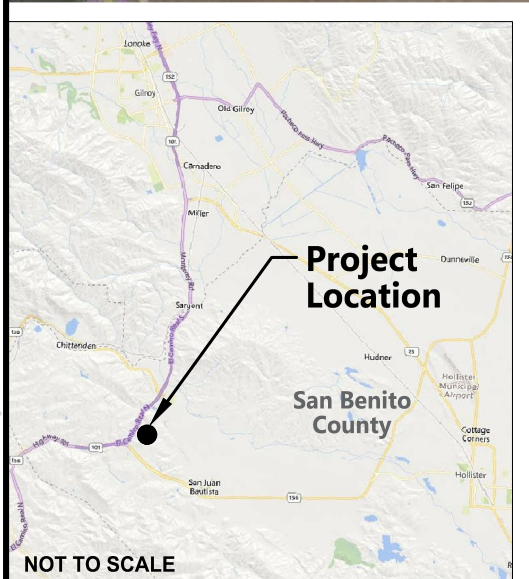
Following the scoping period, the County will perform environmental analyses and prepare a draft EIR that will be circulated for review and comment. Following the draft EIR review process, the County will respond to comments on the draft EIR and prepare a final EIR for consideration by County decisionmakers. County decisionmakers will consider certification of the final EIR at a public hearing and, after certification of the EIR, may take action on the Project.

The County welcomes all comments pertaining to the potential environmental impacts of the Project. All comments will be considered in the preparation of the EIR. Written comments will be accepted through **5:00 PM on August 21, 2023**. Comments may be submitted: (1) by U.S. mail; (2) by electronic mail (email); and/or (3) by attending and providing oral comments at the public scoping meeting.

Comments provided by email should include "Ranch 35 Quarry Scoping Comments" in the subject line, and the name and physical address of the commenter should be contained in the body of the email. Please email comments to Arielle Goodspeed at: agoodspeed@cosb.us.

Comment submitted via U.S. mail should be sent to:

San Benito County Resource Management Agency
Attn: Arielle Goodspeed, Principal Planner
2301 Technology Parkway
Hollister, California 95023



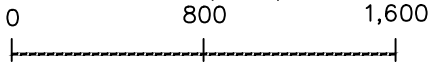
NOT TO SCALE

AERIAL IMAGE SOURCE: Bing Images (2023)

--- Site Boundary



SCALE (in feet)



Ranch 35 Quarry