



State of California – Natural Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
Bay Delta Region
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GAVIN NEWSOM, Governor
CHARLTON H. BONHAM, Director



August 31, 2023

Robert Aguero
Permit Sonoma
2550 Ventura Avenue
Santa Rosa, CA 95405
Robert.Aguero@sonoma-county.org

Subject: PLP22-0027 Canyon Rock Company, Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report, SCH No. 2023080171, Sonoma County

Dear Mr. Aguero:

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) received a Notice of Preparation (NOP) of a draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) from Sonoma County (County) for the PLP22-0027 Canyon Rock Company (Project).

CDFW is providing the County, as the Lead Agency, with specific detail about the scope and content of the environmental information related to CDFW's area of statutory responsibility that must be included in the EIR (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, § 15082, subd. (b)).

CDFW ROLE

CDFW is a **Trustee Agency** with responsibility under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for commenting on projects that could impact fish, plant, and wildlife resources (Pub. Resources Code, § 21000 et seq.; Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, § 15386). CDFW is also considered a **Responsible Agency** if a project would require discretionary approval, such as a permit pursuant to the California Endangered Species Act (CESA) or Native Plant Protection Act (NPPA), the Lake and Streambed Alteration (LSA) Program, and other provisions of the Fish and Game Code that afford protection to the State's fish and wildlife trust resources. Pursuant to our authority, CDFW has the following concerns, comments, and recommendations regarding the Project.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND LOCATION

The Project would develop an asphalt plant using aggregate produced at an existing on-site quarry. At the plant, materials (approximately 95 percent aggregate and 5 percent asphalt cement, by weight) would be brought together and blended into hot or warm mix asphalt. Components of the asphalt plant would include a concrete foundation, eight cold feed bins, conveyor belts, a rotary drier drum, loading silos, truck scales, a bag house, a motor control center, above-ground tanks, an operations building, and an emissions control system. These components would be arranged to fit within an

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approximately 580-foot-long north to south by 300-foot-wide east to west facility floor. Explosive blasting may be used during site preparation. The Project would not increase the volume of material sold from the site as trucks hauling asphalt would replace trucks hauling aggregate

The Project would also rezone portions of Assessor's Parcel Numbers 083-210-017 and 083-210-018 to the Mineral Resource Combining District to allow for the asphalt facility as an ancillary use to the existing quarry operation, and approve an amendment to the existing Reclamation Plan to encompass the asphalt facility and provide for the reclamation of the area in accordance with California's Surface Mining and Reclamation Act of 1975.

The Project is located at the existing Canyon Rock Company Quarry site at 7839 Highway 116, Forestville, CA 95436, in an unincorporated area of Sonoma County at approximately 38.47299°N, -122.91039°W.

The CEQA Guidelines (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, § 15000 et seq.) require that the EIR incorporate a full project description, including reasonably foreseeable future phases of the Project, that contains sufficient information to evaluate and review the Project's environmental impact (CEQA Guidelines, §§ 15124 & 15378). Please include a complete description of the following Project components in the Project description:

- Land use changes resulting from, for example, rezoning certain areas;
- Footprints of permanent Project features and temporarily impacted areas, such as staging areas and access routes;
- Area and plans for any proposed buildings/structures, ground-disturbing activities, fencing, paving, stationary machinery, landscaping, and stormwater systems;
- Operational features of the Project, including level of anticipated human presence (describe seasonal or daily peaks in activity, if relevant), artificial lighting/light reflection, noise, traffic generation, and other features; and
- Construction schedule, activities, equipment, and crew sizes.

REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

California Endangered Species Act and Native Plant Protection Act

Please be advised that a CESA Incidental Take Permit (ITP) must be obtained if the Project has the potential to result in "take" of plants or animals listed under CESA or NPPA, either during construction or over the life of the Project. Under CESA, "take"

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means “hunt, pursue, catch, capture, or kill, or attempt to hunt, pursue, catch, capture, or kill.” (Fish & G. Code, § 86). If the Project will impact CESA listed species, such as those identified in **Attachment 1**, early consultation is encouraged, as significant modification to the Project and mitigation measures may be required in order to obtain a CESA ITP. CDFW’s issuance of an ITP is subject to CEQA and to facilitate permit issuance, any such project modifications and mitigation measures must be incorporated into the EIR’s analysis, discussion, and mitigation monitoring and reporting program.

CEQA requires a Mandatory Finding of Significance if a project is likely to substantially restrict the range or reduce the population of a threatened or endangered species (Pub. Resources Code, §§ 21001, subd. (c) & 21083; CEQA Guidelines, §§ 15380, 15064, & 15065). In addition, pursuant to CEQA, the Lead Agency cannot approve a project unless all impacts to the environment are avoided or mitigated to less-than-significant levels, or the Lead Agency makes and supports findings of overriding consideration (FOC) for impacts that remain significant despite the implementation of all feasible mitigation. FOC under CEQA, however, do not eliminate the Project proponent’s obligation to comply with the Fish and Game Code.

Lake and Streambed Alteration

An LSA Notification, pursuant to Fish and Game Code sections 1600 et. seq., is required for Project activities affecting lakes or streams and associated riparian habitat. Notification is required for any activity that will substantially divert or obstruct the natural flow; change or use material from the bed, channel, or bank including associated riparian or wetland habitat; or deposit or dispose of material where it may pass into a river, lake, or stream. Work within ephemeral streams, washes, watercourses with a subsurface flow, and floodplains are subject to notification requirements. CDFW may not execute the final LSA Agreement until it has considered the final EIR and complied with its responsibilities as a responsible agency under CEQA.

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The EIR should provide sufficient information regarding the environmental setting (“baseline”) to understand the Projects, and its alternatives (if applicable), potentially significant impacts on the environment (CEQA Guidelines, §§ 15125 & 15360).

CDFW recommends that the CEQA document prepared for the Project provide baseline habitat assessments for special-status plant, fish and wildlife species located and potentially located within the Project area and surrounding lands, including, but not limited to all rare, threatened, or endangered species (CEQA Guidelines, § 15380). The EIR should describe aquatic habitats, such as wetlands or waters of the U.S. or State, and any sensitive natural communities or riparian habitat occurring on or adjacent to the Project site (for sensitive natural communities

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see: <https://wildlife.ca.gov/Data/VegCAMP/NaturalCommunities#sensitive%20natural%20communities>), and any stream or wetland set back distances the County may require. Fully protected, threatened, or endangered, candidate, and other special-status species that are known to occur or have the potential to occur in or near the Project site, include, but are not limited to those listed in **Attachment 1**.

Habitat descriptions and the potential for species occurrence included in the draft EIR should include robust information from multiple sources: aerial imagery, historical and recent survey data, field reconnaissance, scientific literature and reports, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) Information, Planning, and Consultation System, California Aquatic Resources Inventory, and findings from "positive occurrence" databases such as California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB). Only with sufficient data and information from the habitat assessment, can the County adequately assess which special-status species are likely to occur on or near the Project site, and whether they could be impacted by the Project.

CDFW recommends that prior to Project implementation, surveys be conducted for special-status species with potential to occur, following recommended survey protocols if available. Survey and monitoring protocols and guidelines are available at: <https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Survey-Protocol>.

Botanical surveys for special-status plant species, including those with a California Rare Plant Rank (<http://www.cnps.org/cnps/rareplants/inventory/>)¹, must be conducted during the blooming period within the Project area and adjacent habitats that may be indirectly impacted by, for example, changes to hydrological conditions, and require the identification of reference populations. More than one year of surveys may be necessary based on environmental conditions. Please refer to CDFW protocols for surveying and evaluating impacts to special status plants available at: <https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Plants>.

IMPACT ANALYSIS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

The EIR should discuss all direct and indirect impacts (temporary and permanent) that may occur with implementation of the Project (CEQA Guidelines, § 15126.2). This includes evaluating and describing impacts such as:

- Land use changes that would reduce open space or agricultural land uses and increase residential or other land use involving increased development;

¹ California Rare Plant Rank (CRPR) 1B plants are considered rare, threatened, or endangered in California and elsewhere. Further information on CRPR ranks is available in CDFW's Special Vascular Plants, Bryophytes, and Lichens List (<https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=109383&inline>) and on the California Native Plant Society website (<https://www.cnps.org/rare-plants/cnps-rare-plant-ranks>).

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- Encroachments into riparian habitats, wetlands or other sensitive areas;
- Potential for impacts to special-status species;
- Loss or modification of breeding, nesting, dispersal and foraging habitat, including vegetation removal, alternation of soils and hydrology, and removal of habitat structural features (e.g., snags, roosts, vegetation overhanging banks);
- Permanent and temporary habitat disturbances associated with ground disturbance, noise, lighting, reflection, air pollution, traffic, or human presence; and
- Obstruction of movement corridors, fish passage, or access to water sources and other core habitat features.

The EIR should also identify existing and reasonably foreseeable future projects in the Project vicinity, disclose any cumulative impacts associated with these projects, determine the significance of each cumulative impact, and assess the significance of the Project's contribution to each impact (CEQA Guidelines, §15355). Although a project's impacts may be insignificant individually, its contributions to a cumulative impact may be considerable; a contribution to a significant cumulative impact – e.g., reduction of available habitat for a special status species – should be considered cumulatively considerable without mitigation to minimize or avoid the impact.

The CEQA Guidelines direct the County, as the Lead Agency, to consider and describe in the EIR all feasible mitigation measures to avoid and/or mitigate potentially significant impacts of the Project on the environment based on comprehensive analysis of the direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts of the Project (CEQA Guidelines, §§ 15021, 15063, 15071, 15126.2, 15126.4 & 15370). This should include a discussion of impact avoidance and minimization measures for special-status species, which are recommended to be developed in early consultation with CDFW, USFWS, and the National Marine Fisheries Service. These measures can then be incorporated as enforceable Project conditions to reduce potential impacts to biological resources to less-than-significant levels.

ENVIRONMENTAL DATA

CEQA requires that information developed in EIRs, and negative declarations be incorporated into a database which may be used to make subsequent or supplemental environmental determinations (Pub. Resources Code, § 21003, subd. (e)). Accordingly, please report any special-status species and natural communities detected during Project surveys to CNDDDB. The CNDDDB online field survey form and other methods for submitting data can be found at the following link:

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<https://wildlife.ca.gov/Data/CNDDDB/Submitting-Data>. The types of information reported to CNDDDB can be found at the following link:

<https://wildlife.ca.gov/Data/CNDDDB/Plantsand-Animals>.

FILING FEES

CDFW anticipates that the proposed Project will have an impact on fish and/or wildlife, and assessment of filing fees is necessary to defray the costs of CDFW's review under CEQA (Fish & G. Code, § 711.4; Pub. Resources Code, § 21089). Fees are payable upon filing of the Notice of Determination by the Lead Agency.

If you have any questions, please contact Alexander Single, Environmental Scientist, at (707) 980-5154 or Alexander.Single@wildlife.ca.gov; or Melanie Day, Senior Environmental Scientist (Supervisory), at (707) 210-4415 or Melanie.Day@wildlife.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

Erin Chappell

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Erin Chappell
Regional Manager
Bay Delta Region

Attachment 1: Special-Status Species

ec: Office of Planning and Research, State Clearinghouse (SCH No. 2023080171)

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ATTACHMENT 1: Special-Status Species

Species Name	Common Name	Status
<i>Oncorhynchus kisutch</i>	Coho salmon - Central California Coast Evolutionarily Significant Unit	FE, SE
<i>Syncaris pacifica</i>	California freshwater shrimp	FE, SE
<i>Arctostaphylos densiflora</i>	Vine Hill manzanita	SE, 1B.1
<i>Oncorhynchus mykiss irideus</i>	steelhead - Central California Coast Distinct Population Segment (DPS)	FT
<i>Rana boylei</i>	foothill yellow-legged frog - north coast DPS	SSC
<i>Hysteroecarpus traskii pomo</i>	Russian River tule perch	SSC
<i>Lasiurus frantzii</i>	western red bat	SSC
<i>Emys marmorata</i>	western pond turtle	SSC
<i>Dicamptodon ensatus</i>	California giant salamander	SSC
<i>Corynorhinus townsendii</i>	Townsend's big-eared bat	SSC
<i>Antrozous pallidus</i>	pallid bat	SSC
<i>Arborimus pomo</i>	Sonoma tree vole	SSC
<i>Arctostaphylos stanfordiana</i> ssp. <i>Decumbens</i>	Rincon Ridge manzanita	CRPR 1B.1
<i>Ceanothus confusus</i>	Rincon Ridge ceanothus	CRPR 1B.1
<i>Ceanothus foliosus</i> var. <i>vineatus</i>	Vine Hill ceanothus	CRPR 1B.1
<i>Ceanothus purpureus</i>	holly-leaved ceanothus	CRPR 1B.2
<i>Clarkia imbricata</i>	Vine Hill clarkia	CRPR 1B.1
<i>Delphinium luteum</i>	golden larkspur	CRPR 1B.1
<i>Gilia capitata</i> ssp. <i>tomentosa</i>	woolly-headed gilia	CRPR 1B.1
<i>Lessingia arachnoidea</i>	Crystal Springs lessingia	CRPR 1B.2

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<i>Hemizonia congesta</i> ssp. <i>Congesta</i>	congested-headed hayfield tarplant	CRPR 1B.2
<i>Horkelia tenuiloba</i>	thin-lobed horkelia	CRPR 1B.2
<i>Erigeron greenei</i>	Greene's narrow-leaved daisy	CRPR 1B.2
<i>Fritillaria liliacea</i>	fragrant fritillary	CRPR 1B.2
<i>Cordylanthus tenuis</i> ssp. <i>Capillaris</i>	Pennell's bird's-beak	CRPR 1B.2
<i>Amorpha californica</i> var. <i>napensis</i>	Napa false indigo	CRPR 1B.2
<i>Cuscuta obtusiflora</i> var. <i>glandulosa</i>	Peruvian dodder	CRPR 2B.2

FE = federally listed as endangered under the Endangered Species Act (ESA); FT = federally listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act; SE = state listed as threatened under the California Endangered Species Act; Rare = protected under the Native Plant Protection Act of 1977; SSC = state Species of Special Concern; CRPR = California Rare Plant Rank