



# Forest Ecosystem Management

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## Northern Spotted Owl Assessment for Fantesca Winery Project

Completed by: Pamela Town, Consulting Wildlife Biologist  
August 8, 2024

### Northern Spotted Owls (*Strix occidentalis caurina*)

Northern Spotted Owls (NSO) are listed as Threatened under both the Federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) and California State Endangered Species Act (CESA), as well as Sensitive under California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CalFire). They are a common to uncommon owl in the coniferous forest of the Pacific Northwest (PNW), ranging from southern British Columbia south to Marin County in northwestern California.

The northern spotted owl is a subspecies of spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis*) found in western North America. They are medium-sized (16 to 20 inches) dark brown owls with a barred tail, white spots on their head and breast; and dark brown eyes surrounded by a prominent facial disk. The northern spotted owl is a permanent resident in suitable habitat residing in dense, old-growth, and multi-layered second-growth stands of mixed conifer, redwood, and Douglas-fir habitats.

Northern Spotted Owls are rodent specialists, primarily feeding on woodrats (*Neotoma fuscipes*), deer mice (*Peromyscus spp.*), Sonoma tree voles (*Arborimus pomo*), voles (*Microtus spp.*) and northern flying squirrels (*Glaucomys sabrimus*); but has been known to consume small birds, bats, amphibians, and large arthropods. Foraging is completed by searching for prey from a perch and swooping/pouncing on the prey. NSOs usually nest in stick nests (mistletoe clump, abandoned raptor, or squirrel nest), in a cavity tree or snag, or in the broken top of a large tree. In the interior region of their range (as seen in Napa County), there appears to be a preference for well-shaded habitat in narrow, steep-sided canyons with north or east-facing slopes to assist in thermoregulatory needs, as they are intolerant of high temperatures.

Spotted owl life-history traits suggest coevolution with late-seral, old-growth forests, and second-growth forests with scattered late-seral characteristics. They are relatively long-lived and have high adult survival, low reproductive output, and high parental investment in offspring.

Threats to the northern spotted owl include increased competition, and perhaps predation, from the barred owl (*Strix varia*). In addition to the threats from the barred owls, spotted owl populations may also be negatively impacted by large-scale wildfires and unregulated activities that modify habitat and introduce toxic substances into the environment and food chain (i.e. illegal logging, development, marijuana cultivation, etc.).

This Assessment is for the Fantesca Winery Project located at 2920 Spring Mountain Road in St. Helena, CA within Napa County; which occurs within the range of the Northern Spotted Owl.

### **Property General Information (Attachment #1)**

Project Location: 2920 Spring Mountain Road; St. Helena, CA  
Legal Description of Parcel: Portions of Section 26, T08N, R06W MDB&M  
APN: 022-250-008  
Acres: Project Size: 1.0 +/- Acre and Property Size: 52.6 +/- acres  
County: Napa County  
Access: Spring Mountain Road  
Proposed Project: Use Permit Modification – Site Improvement Plan (Attachment #2)

### **Known Northern Spotted Owl Territories**

According to the California Department of Fish & Wildlife’s spotted owl viewer dated 08AUG24, there are no known northern spotted owl territories within 1.3 miles of the Property Boundary (Attachment #3). The 1.3-mile assessment area was created by USFWS for a Take Avoidance of northern spotted owls within the California Interior (outside the redwood zone). Although Napa County does have redwoods, the environmental conditions in the area are hotter/drier than the coastal redwood zone; therefore, the 1.3-mile assessment area was used for this Property. The closest known NSO territory is NAP0033, which occurs over 1 ½ miles away from the Property Boundary.

### **Northern Spotted Owl Habitat**

The attributes of northern spotted owl habitat include a forest with:

- Dense, multi-layered canopy of several tree species.
- Trees of varying sizes and ages.
- Abundant logs, snags/cavity trees, and trees with broken tops or platform-like substrates (i.e., broken tops, mistletoe, debris piles, or old raptor/squirrel nests).
- Open spaces among lower branches to allow flight under the canopy.
- A prey base source.

The specific definitions of NSO habitat from USFWS include:

- High-Quality Nesting/Roosting Habitat: Mixed tree species with a basal area of 210+ ft<sup>2</sup> and ≥ 15” quadratic mean diameter, and ≥ 8 trees per acre of trees ≥ 26” in diameter at breast height, and ≥ 60% canopy closure.

- Suitable Nesting/Roosting Habitat: Mixed tree species with basal area ranging from 150 - 180+ ft<sup>2</sup> and  $\geq 15''$  quadratic mean diameter, and  $\geq 8$  trees per acre of trees  $\geq 26''$  in diameter at breast height, and  $\geq 60\%$  canopy closure.
- Suitable Foraging Habitat: Mixed tree species with basal area ranging from 120 - 180+ ft<sup>2</sup> and  $\geq 13''$  quadratic mean diameter, and  $\geq 5$  trees per acre of trees  $\geq 26''$  in diameter at breast height, and a mix of  $\geq 40\%$  to 100% canopy closure.
- Low Quality Foraging Habitat: Mixed tree species with basal area ranging from 80 - 120+ ft<sup>2</sup> and  $\geq 11''$  quadratic mean diameter, and  $\geq 40\%$  canopy closure.

**Property:**

The Property is located at 2920 Spring Mountain Road just outside the St Helena city limits. Portions of the Property, as well as the surrounding area, were impacted by the 2020 Glass Wildfire (Attachment #4). The vegetation on the Property is mixed broadleaf/conifer forest, chaparral, vineyards, and structures. The Project site is located immediately adjacent to an existing vineyard. The area on the north - northwestern section, including the Project Area, of the Property, and the southern portion of the Property were impacted by the Glass Wildfire either through direct burning or heat damage killing the trees. The eastern side of the Property still has a living mixed forest.

Before the 2020 Glass Wildfire, the property may have possessed a forested condition that could have been marginally suitable for northern spotted owls; however, the wildfire heavily impacted the area. The majority of forest structure within ¼ mile of the Project burned. The living forest, both within the Property Boundary and immediately adjacent to the Property may have a forested condition that could be marginally suitable for northern spotted owls; however, when one examines the size of the forested patch and surrounding landscape; it is highly unlikely northern spotted owls would use the area (forested patches too small surrounded by unsuitable habitat conditions of houses, vineyards, burned forest, chaparral, and commercial development).

**Northern Spotted Owl Protection Measures**

The Project Area does not contain suitable northern spotted owl habitat, nor is there suitable habitat within ¼ mile of the Property Boundary, primarily due to the 2020 Glass Wildfire and location close to the Napa Valley bottom. There are no known northern spotted owl territories within 1.3 miles of the Property Boundary. Therefore, the following Protection Measures are recommended:

- No surveys are recommended
- No further mitigation measures are recommended until the forest within and adjacent to the Property has matured to meet USFWS NSO habitat definitions.
- This Assessment is for the 1 +/- acre Project as outlined in Attachment #2. Change of Project location within the Property Boundary would require an updated assessment.

**Attachments**

Attachment #1 – Map of Project Area and NSOs within 1.3 miles

Attachment #2 – Engineer’s Map of Project Description

Attachment #3 - NSO Database Report

Attachment #4 – Fantesca Winery Project Boundary and ¼ mile assessment area aerial photo

## **Additional Information**

### Northern Spotted Owl Contact Information:

Questions or comments regarding this NSO information can be directed to:

Pamela Town  
Consulting Wildlife Biologist & SOE  
Forest Ecosystem Management, PLLC  
(406) 490-7427  
[Pamtown30@gmail.com](mailto:Pamtown30@gmail.com)

### References:

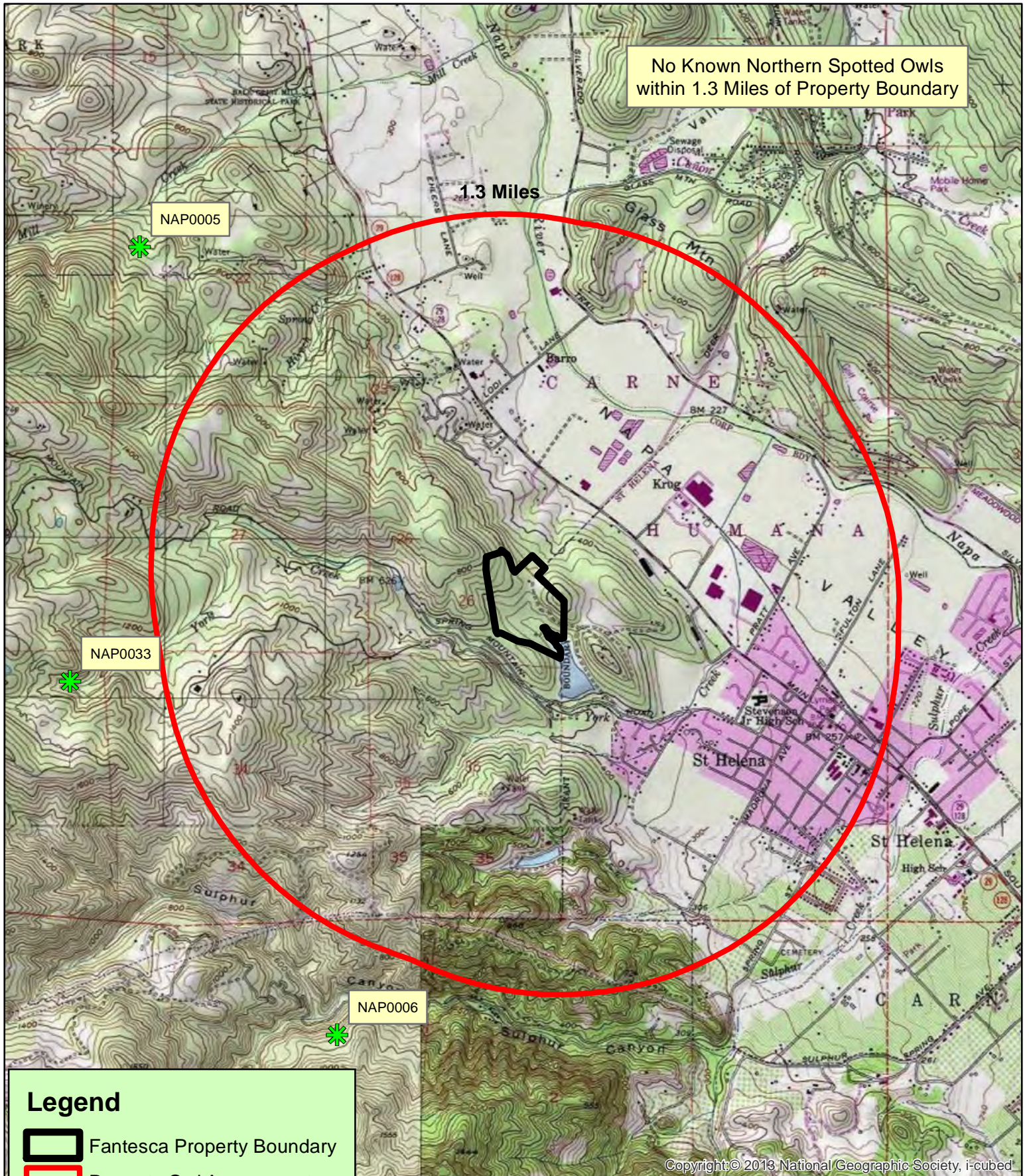
Protocol for Surveying Proposed Management Activities That May Impact Northern Spotted Owls. Endorsed by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. February 2, 2011 and Revised January 9, 2012.

Northern Spotted Owl Viewer (BIOS CA Natural Diversity Database). Managed by California Department of Fish & Wildlife.

Zeiner, D.C., W.F. Laudenslayer, K.E. Mayer, and M. White, eds. 1988 – 1990. California's Wildlife. Vol. I – III. California Department of Fish & Game, Sacramento, CA.



# Fantesca Winery Project



No Known Northern Spotted Owls within 1.3 Miles of Property Boundary

1.3 Miles

NAP0005

NAP0033

NAP0006

**Legend**

- Fantesca Property Boundary
- Property Owl Assessment
- NSO Activity Center

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Sec. 26 T08N, R06W MDB&M  
Parcel: 022-250-0008  
Napa County

1 in = 3,333 ft  
Date: 8/8/2024 5



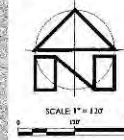


# FANTESCA WINERY

## USE PERMIT MODIFICATION CONCEPTUAL SITE IMPROVEMENT PLANS



**OVERALL SITE PLAN**  
SCALE 1" = 120'



**LOCATION MAP**  
SCALE 1" = 3,000'

**PROJECT INFORMATION:**

**PROPERTY OWNER & APPLICANT:**  
FANTESCA LLC  
6600 FRANCE AVENUE SOUTH, SUITE 550  
MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55435

**SITE ADDRESS:**  
2920 SPRING MOUNTAIN ROAD  
SAINT HELENA, CA 94574

**ASSESSOR'S PARCEL NUMBER:**  
022-250-008

**PARCEL SIZE:**  
52.6 ± ACRES

**PROJECT SIZE:**  
1.0 ± ACRE

**ZONING:**  
AGRICULTURAL WATERSHED (AW)

**DOMESTIC WATER SOURCE:**  
PRIVATE GROUNDWATER WELL

**FIRE PROTECTION WATER SOURCE:**  
STORAGE TANK

**WASTEWATER DISPOSAL:**  
ONSITE TREATMENT AND DISPERSAL

**SHEET INDEX:**

- C1 OVERALL SITE PLAN
- C2 CONCEPTUAL DRIVEWAY AND SITE GRADING PLAN
- C3 DRIVEWAY PROFILES STA 20+00 TO STA 202+00
- C4 DRIVEWAY CROSS SECTIONS STA 22+00 TO STA 104+00
- C5 STORMWATER CONTROL PLAN
- C6 IMPERVIOUS SURFACE EXHIBIT

**PURPOSE STATEMENT:**

THE PURPOSE OF THIS PROJECT IS TO ILLUSTRATE THE CONCEPTUAL DESIGN OF SITE IMPROVEMENTS PROPOSED AS PART OF THIS USE PERMIT MODIFICATION APPLICATION.

**FLOOD HAZARD NOTE:**

ACCORDING TO THE FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY (FEMA) FLOOD INSURANCE RATE MAP (FIRM) MAP NUMBER 0803004E, EFFECTIVE SEPTEMBER 16, 2008, THE PROJECT SITE IS NOT LOCATED IN A SPECIAL FLOOD HAZARD AREA.

**NOTES:**

1. FADED BACKGROUND REPRESENTS EXISTING TOPOGRAPHIC FEATURES. TOPOGRAPHIC INFORMATION ON SHEET C1 WAS TAKEN FROM THE NAPA COUNTY GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM (GAS) DATABASE. TOPOGRAPHIC INFORMATION ON OTHER SHEETS WAS TAKEN FROM THE TOPOGRAPHIC MAP OF A PORTION OF THE LANDS OF FANTESCA LLC PREPARED BY TERRA FINNA SURVEYS, INC. DATED JULY 2022. APPLIED CIVIL ENGINEERING INCORPORATED ASSUMES NO LIABILITY REGARDING THE ACCURACY OR COMPLETENESS OF THE TOPOGRAPHIC INFORMATION.
2. AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH IS NAIPR PHOTOS CAPTURED BY PHOTOGRAPHY INTERNATIONAL DATED JULY 15, 2021 AND MAY NOT REPRESENT CURRENT CONDITIONS.
3. CONTOUR INTERVAL:  
SHEET C1: FIVE (5) FEET, HIGHLIGHTED EVERY TWENTY FIVE (25) FEET.  
OTHER SHEETS: ONE (1) FOOT, HIGHLIGHTED EVERY FIVE (5) FEET.
4. VERTICAL DATUM: NAVD 83
5. THE PROPERTY LINES SHOWN ON THESE PLANS DO NOT REPRESENT A BOUNDARY SURVEY. THEY ARE APPROXIMATE AND ARE PROVIDED FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY.



**FANTESCA WINERY**  
 USE PERMIT MODIFICATION CONCEPTUAL SITE IMPROVEMENT PLANS  
 OVERALL SITE PLAN



**DRAWN BY:** PowerCAD LLC  
**CHECKED BY:** MRM  
**DATE:** MAY 2, 2024

**REVISIONS:**

NO.	DATE	BY	DESCRIPTION
1	12/19/2023	YHS	RESPONSE TO COMMENTS
2	5/2/2024	YHS	RESPONSE TO COMMENTS

**JOB NUMBER:** 11-121  
**FILE:** 11-121CONC-OSPDWG  
**ORIGINAL SIZE:** 24" x 36"  
**SHEET NUMBER:**

**C1**



Attachment #3 - NSO Database

Data Version Date:  
07/31/2024

Report Generation Date:  
8/8/2024

**Report #1 - Spotted Owl Sites Found**  
Known Spotted Owl sites having observations  
within the search area.



Meridian, Township, Range, Section (MTRS) searched:

M\_07N\_06W Sections(01,02,03);

M\_08N\_06W Sections(22,23,24,25,26,27,34,35,36);

NOTES:

Fantesca

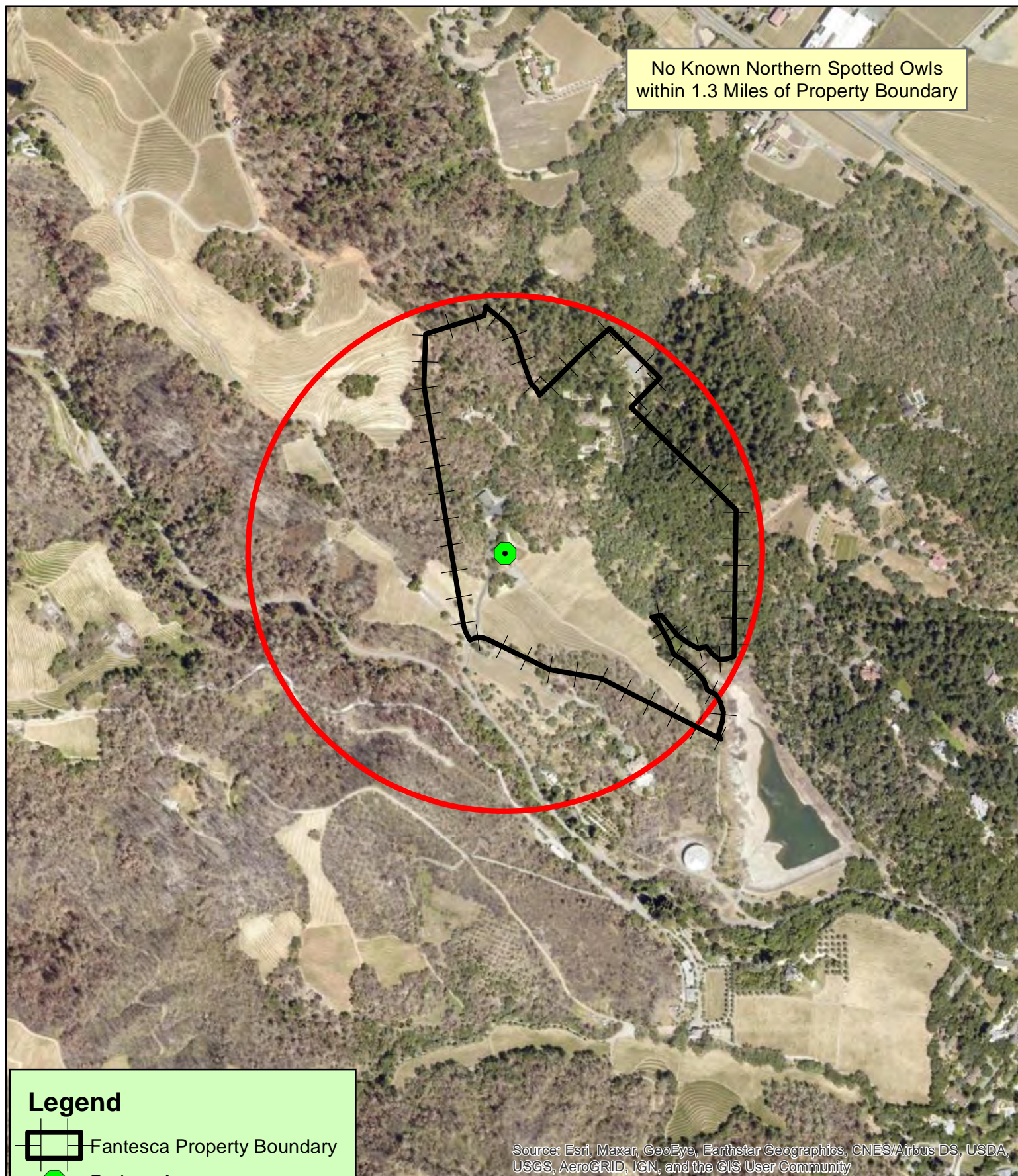
Masterowl	Subspecies	LatDD NAD83	LonDD NAD83	MTRS	AC Coordinate Source
NAP0005	NORTHERN	38.532391	-122.521177	M 08N 06W 22	Contributor 1.8 Miles
NAP0006	NORTHERN	38.488207	-122.507031	M 07N 06W 03	Contributor 1.6
NAP0033	NORTHERN	38.508038	-122.526177	M 08N 06W 33	Contributor 1.6

Owls in  
1.3 Miles  
None



# Fantesca Winery Project

No Known Northern Spotted Owls  
within 1.3 Miles of Property Boundary



### Legend

- Fantesca Property Boundary
- Project\_Area
- Project Area 1/4 Mile

Source: Esri, Maxar, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community

Sec. 26 T08N, R06W MDB&M  
Parcel: 022-250-0008  
Napa County

1 in = 833 ft

Date: 8/8/2024 8

