



## ATTACHMENT B - 2

### PROJECT REVIEW

#### Background:

The property is located in the fertile Los Osos Valley which is characterized by irrigated prime land planted in row crops in the valley floor and grazing land on the steeper slopes lining the valley. The property is leased to a farm operator. The land owners are requesting establishment of an agricultural preserve to allow them to enter into a land conservation contract.

#### Site and Area Characteristics

The property is surrounded by properties in similar agricultural use --- irrigated row crops with grazing land on the adjacent hillsides. Agricultural preserves and land conservation contracts are somewhat scattered in the Los Osos Valley. The property is planted in approximately 155 acres of irrigated row crops. Some fields are rotated to dry farming in certain years. A reservoir on an adjoining parcel that is also leased by the same farm operator provides most of the water for irrigation. There are also five wells that produce 200 gallons per minute of water also used for irrigation.

#### Soils Evaluation

The following table shows the Natural Resources Conservation Service soils ratings of the site:

Land Capability Class		Irrigated Crop Suitability	Rangeland Suitability	Dry Farm Suitability	Agricultural Use	Acres
If Irrigated	Non-Irrigated					
1	3	well suited	NA	well suited	row crop	5
2	3	well suited	NA	well suited	row crop	146
2	3	well suited	well suited	well suited	grazing	56
3	3	well suited	well suited	well suited	row crop	4
3	3	well suited	well suited	well suited	grazing	54.5
6	6	NA	well suited	NA	grazing	102
6	6	NA	moderately suited	NA	grazing	40
NA	7	NA	poorly suited	NA	not used	45
				Total		452.5

As can be seen from the above table, the property contains a significant amount of prime land with Class 1 & 2 soils. Most of the remaining portion of the property has soils rated as moderate to well suited as rangeland. Most of the irrigated row crops, approximately 151 acres, are planted on the Class 1 and 2 prime soils. Approximately 4 acres are planted on Class 3 soils. Approximately 45 acres are located on steep rocky soils or creeks and are not used for farming or grazing. The remaining acreage, approximately 252.5 acres, is used for grazing cattle.

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Exhibit A shows the location, topography and land use designations of the site and adjacent properties.

### **Compliance with the Agricultural Preserve Rules of Procedure**

The Rules of Procedure require 40 acres of prime land to qualify for a prime land preserve. The site's approximately 151 acres planted in irrigated row crops on Class 1 and Class 2 soils allow establishment of a prime land agricultural preserve.

The Rules of Procedure require 10 acres of irrigated agriculture on Class 1 or 2 soils to individually qualify for a land conservation contract. With 151 acres of irrigated row crops the property easily qualifies for a land conservation contract.

Due to the substantial amount of non-irrigated Class 3 soils and Class 6 soils used for rangeland it is appropriate to use Appendix E to determine the minimum parcel size for conveyance. Appendix E of the Rules of Procedure establishes procedures for determining minimum parcel sizes for conveyance or subdivision of land with mixed agricultural potential or use. The property's Class 1 & Class 2 soils have been evaluated individually due to the different minimum parcel size for conveyance, the Class 6 & 7 soils have been grouped together as grazing land for the purposes of calculating minimum parcel size. The mixed use calculation for this property is as follows:

Land Capability / Agricultural Use	Acres	Minimum Parcel Size	Fractional Portion
Irrigated Class 1 / Irrigated Row Crops	5	20	0.25
Irrigated Class 2 / Irrigated Row Crops	146	40	3.65
Non-Irrigated Class 6 & 7 / Grazing	301.5	320	0.94
Total	452.5		4.84

The property size of 452.5 acres divided by 4.84 (the total fractional proportions) is 93.49, which is rounded up to a 160 acre minimum parcel size category in Table 1 of the Rules of Procedure.

The appropriate minimum parcel size is 160 acres and the appropriate minimum term of contract is 20 years because the site is located more than one mile from the Los Osos urban reserve line, the closest urban reserve line in the vicinity.

### **Agricultural Preserve Review Committee (APRC)**

The following is an excerpt from the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Agricultural Preserve Review Committee held on September 17, 2012 at the U.C. Cooperative Extension Auditorium, San Luis Obispo, California, at 1:30 p.m.

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Terry Wahler, staff: presents staff report describes existing agricultural land use and eligibility.

No members deliberate item.

**Following the discussion, Jon Pedotti moved to approve this request to establish an agricultural preserve to allow the applicant to enter into a land conservation contract, Preserve Designation: Los Osos Valley Agricultural Preserve No. 25. Minimum Parcel Size: 160 acres. Minimum Term of Contract: 20 years. This motion was seconded by Robert Sparling, and carried unanimously on a 10-0 vote with the Farm Service Agency, Soil Science, and County Planning Department members being absent.**

### RECOMMENDATIONS

The Agricultural Preserve Review Committee and Planning Commission recommend approval of this request to establish an agricultural preserve to the Board of Supervisors as follows:

<b>Preserve Designation:</b>	<b>Los Osos Valley Agricultural Preserve No. 25</b>
<b>Minimum Parcel Size:</b>	<b>160 Acres</b>
<b>Minimum Term of Contract:</b>	<b>20 Years</b>

### FINDINGS

- A. The proposed establishment of this agricultural preserve is consistent with the San Luis Obispo County General Plan, including the Land Use Element, Agriculture Element, the Conservation and Open Space Element, and the county's Rules of Procedure to Implement the California Land Conservation Act of 1965.
- B. The proposed establishment of this agricultural preserve is appropriate and consistent with the character of the surrounding area.

Report prepared by Terry Wahler  
and reviewed by Warren Hoag  
Land Conservation Program