

PROJECT REVIEW

Site and Area Characteristics

The property consists of three legal parcels of approximately 40, 44, and 80 acres. The topography of the property ranges from moderately to steeply sloping.

The Assessors records show the property as having small accessory structures but no residences. It appears that these accessory structures have been removed to allow more room for vineyards. A prominent drainage course runs north south through the eastern side of the property. This area is fallow but surrounded on both sides with irrigated vineyard. A total of approximately 161 acres is planted in irrigated vineyard. The vineyards were planted in 20012-2013. An agricultural irrigation well produces 100 gallons per minute of water at a well depth of 620 feet. Surrounding properties are also in the Agriculture zone and have a variety of agricultural land uses including grazing, dry farm, and vineyards. The following table shows the Natural Resources Conservation Service soils rating of the site:

Land Capability Class		Irrigated Vineyard	Homesite & barns	Fallow/drainage course	Acres
If Irrigated	Non-Irrigated				
4	4	161	na	3	164
TOTALS		161		3	164

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

Compliance with the Williamson Act and the Rules of Procedure

Establishing an Agricultural Preserve

The Rules of Procedure provides that a property must first be under an Agricultural Preserve in order to qualify for a land conservation contract as an individual property. The applicant's 164 acres exceeds the gross acreage necessary to qualify as a prime land agricultural preserve.

A prime-land preserve must also have 40 acres of Class 1 or 2 irrigated land under production (typically in fruit or vegetable row crops), irrigated Class 3, 4, 6 or 7 soil (planted with orchards or vineyards) or Class 3 or 4 soils (planted in all other irrigated crops – typically alfalfa or irrigated pasture).

Since the property has 161 acres planted in irrigated vineyards (over 40 acres) the eligibility requirements to establish a prime land agricultural preserve are met outright without relying on the "recognized high value of irrigated vineyard and orchards on non-prime soils", under the income & value criteria of Section B. 1.b.(2)(b) of the Rules of Procedure to Implement the Land Conservation Act of 1965.

Qualifying for a Land Conservation Contract

To qualify for a land conservation contract the property must also meet the eligibility requirements for individual land conservation contracts and have 20 acres of irrigated vineyard or orchard on Class 3, 4, 6, or 7 soils. The property qualifies for a land conservation contract by having approximately 161 acres of irrigated vineyard on Class 4 soils. (Table 1 Section B. 1.c).

The appropriate minimum parcel size is 40 acres based on irrigated vineyard as the commercial agricultural use.

The appropriate minimum term of contract is 20 years because the site is located more than 1 mile (3.5) from the San Miguel urban reserve line.

Potential Future Conveyance

There is the potential for future conveyance of the three individual legal parcels since they each equal or exceed the Minimum Parcel Size for conveyance of 40 acres.

Agricultural Preserve Review Committee

The following is an excerpt from the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Agricultural Preserve Review Committee held on July 14, 2014 at the Veteran’s Hall, 801 Grand Ave, San Luis Obispo, California, at 1:30 p.m.

Terry Wahler presents the staff report, describes the property, agricultural use and basis for program eligibility.

Kami Griffin asks if there are any questions or any Public Comment with no one coming forward.

Following the discussion, Lynda Auchinachie moved to recommend the Board of Supervisors approve this request to establish an agricultural preserve to enable the applicant to enter into a land conservation contract. Preserve Designation: Estrella Agricultural Preserve No. 54. Minimum Parcel Size: 40 acres. Minimum term of Contract: 20 years. This motion was seconded by Jennifer Anderson, and unanimously approved on a 9-4 vote with the Public at Large, Farm Bureau, Farm Advisor and Soil Science 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:

Preserve Designation:	Estrella Agricultural Preserve No. 54
Minimum Parcel Size:	40 Acres
Minimum Term of Contract:	20 Years

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, 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
Agricultural Preserve Program