



COUNTY OF SONOMA

575 ADMINISTRATION
DRIVE, ROOM 102A
SANTA ROSA, CA 95403

SUMMARY REPORT

Agenda Date: 5/14/2024

To: Board of Supervisors

Department or Agency Name(s): Permit Sonoma

Staff Name and Phone Number: Jacob A. Sedgley, (707) 565-1931

Vote Requirement: Majority

Supervisorial District(s): 5th

Title:

File No. CPH23-0011 The Wildlands Conservancy Request for Coastal Permit Consolidation by the California Coastal Commission, located at 2000 Estero Lane, Bodega Bay; APN 100-160-002.

Recommended Action:

Adopt a Resolution authorizing the California Coastal Commission to consolidate approvals required for this project into a single Coastal Development Permit to be processed by the California Coastal Commission.

Executive Summary:

In late December 2015, through the combined efforts of Sonoma Land Trust and other funding partners (State Coastal Conservancy, Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District, and Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation) The Wildlands Conservancy acquired the 547- acre Estero Ranch. The Wildlands Conservancy seeks to establish a network of approximately five miles of designated hiking trails on the property.

On November 2nd, 2023, Permit Sonoma received an application to construct the trails and other improvements associated with the project. Permit Sonoma determined that the proposal requires two Coastal Development Permits, one issued by Sonoma County, and another issued by the California Coastal Commission. Many development projects within the California Coastal Zone require permits from both the local government agency (e.g., city or county) and the California Coastal Commission. Under the Consolidated Permit Process, applicants have the option to integrate the local permit application process with the Coastal Commission's permit review process. This integration allows the Commission to consider the local permit application concurrently with its own review, avoiding duplication of efforts and expediting the overall permitting timeline.

The Applicant has requested consolidation. The Coastal Act permits this consolidation. Staff recommends approval of the request, authorizing the California Coastal Commission to consolidate approvals required for this into a single Coastal Development Permit to be processed by the California Coastal Commission.

Discussion:

The Coastal Act allows for the consolidation of Coastal Commission and County permits in certain circumstances. The Coastal Conservancy seeks to consolidate approvals required for this project into a single Coastal Development Permit to be processed by the California Coastal Commission. The current project proposal entails the establishment of a network of approximately five miles of designated hiking trails as an

integral component of the overarching proposed project. Zoning for the parcel is Coastal Land Extensive Agriculture - 160 acres per dwelling unit and a 640-acre minimum lot size (LEA CC B6 160/640 (Ac/DU)/Ac MIN), with Biotic Habitat (BH), Floodway (F2), Geologic Hazard Area (G), Riparian Corridor (RC100/50), and Scenic Resources (SR) Combining Districts.

Project Summary

The project proposal includes a phased Public Access Plan for the Estero Ranch (APN 100-160-002), as well as minor improvements to accommodate visitors including signage, cattle fencing, improved restroom facilities, viewing telescopes, and benches. The project is proposed to be executed in three distinct phases as follows:

Phase 1: This phase encompasses scheduled public vehicular access via Estero Lane and guided hikes/tours conducted by The Wildlands Conservancy (limited to 4 per year).

Phase 2: In this phase, only scheduled public pedestrian access will be provided, originating from Shorttail Gulch, and connecting to existing trail systems. Additionally, public kayaking access will be facilitated from Valley Ford to Estero Beach. Basic public restroom facilities and informational signage will be installed and plans for staff housing and restroom development will be outlined.

Phase 3: During this phase, Preserve Trails will be open to the public daily from 8 AM until sunset, with no admission fees. Existing structures will undergo renovation to accommodate staff housing, and public restrooms will be integrated within the existing building envelope. Renovations will include upgrading the septic system to accommodate public use.

Please refer to Attachment 2 for the full project proposal prepared by the applicant, and Attachment 3 for the project site plan.

Permit Consolidation

On November 2nd, 2023, Permit Sonoma received an application to construct the trails and other improvements associated with the project. These activities require a Coastal Permit with Hearing (CPH) pursuant to Sonoma County Code Section 26C-340. The project involves improved public access and increased intensity of access to the Estero Americano, including areas at or below the mean high tide line where the California Coastal Commission retains primary permitting authority. The project meets definition of development under Section 30106 of the Coastal Act and requires a Coastal Development Permit to be issued by the California Coastal Commission.

If the County chooses to directly maintain local control, the project approval requires the County to process the local Coastal Permit. After the County process is complete, a separate Coastal Permit would be processed by the Coastal Commission for the portion of the project that is within their jurisdiction. When both a local permit and a Coastal Commission permit are required, the Consolidated Permit Process allows for the integration of these permits into a single comprehensive review process. Under Section 30601.3 of the Public Resources Code, the Coastal Commission may process and act upon a consolidate coastal development permit application if the following criteria are satisfied:

- 1) The proposed project requires a coastal development permit from both a local government with a certified local coastal program and the commission; and,

- 2) The applicant, the appropriate local government, and the commission, which may agree through its executive director, consent to the consolidated permit action, provided that public participation is not substantially impaired by that review consolidation.

The applicant submitted a letter to planning staff requesting consolidation. Conversations between Planning staff and the California Coastal Commission have included the staff representing the Commission indicated initial acceptance of the consolidation request. Staff does not believe that public participation will be substantially impaired by the consolidation.

Staff recommends adoption of the proposed resolution authorizing the California Coastal Commission to consolidate approvals required for this into a single Coastal Development Permit to be processed by the California Coastal Commission.

Prior Board Actions:

None.

FISCAL SUMMARY

Not applicable.

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

None. The applicant pays for the costs of processing the application. There will be no new fiscal impacts as a result of this action.

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

Not applicable.

Attachments:

- ATT 1 Draft Board of Supervisors Resolution
- ATT 2 Project Description Prepared by The Wildland Conservancy
- ATT 3 Site Plan
- ATT 4 Assessor's Parcel Maps

Related Items "On File" with the Clerk of the Board:

Not applicable.