

February 5, 2019

**UPC17-0012 - Request for Park Setback Reduction from Jack London State Historic Park**  
Glentucky Family Farm LLC, Mike Benziger, Owner/Applicant/Managing Partner

**Request**

The revision of the Cannabis Ordinance, now Ordinance No. 6245, that went into effect in November, 2018 has allowed for the opportunity to request a reduction to the 1,000 feet a park setback "...with a use permit when it is determined that an actual physical equivalent separation exists due to topography, vegetation or slope, that no offsite impacts will occur, and that the cannabis operation is not accessible or visible from the park."

Mike Benziger, the Conditional Use Permit applicant and a double cancer survivor is requesting a reduction in the setback for his Outdoor Specialty Cultivation of 50 plants. He filed his permit application in July, 2017 and is pleased to submit letters of support from his neighbors, including Jack London State Historic Park (Letter from Eric Metz, Director of Operations, Jack London State Historic Park plus six additional letters from neighbors).

**Relationship to Jack London State Historic Park**

His commitment to the JLSHP, (his next door neighbor), led him to become a founding member of Jack London Park Partners. A citizens group formed in May 2012, to prevent JLSHP from closure due to severe financial shortfalls in the State Parks budget during that era. He currently serves as Chair of the Board of Directors for JLPP.

As Chair of the Board of Directors and a neighbor to the park, he is mindful that although his property does not meet the distance of the park setback, it does meet the requirements for an "actual physical equivalent separation".

The park area is densely forested with both deciduous and non-deciduous trees and foliage including a lot of poison oak, blackberries, and fallen tree branches. Even at this time of year (winter), his property is not visible from any location in the park, much less his raised bed cultivation area for 50 plants. In the summer, the park vegetation is even denser and his orchard that borders his property is filled out, further blocking any visible signs of the cultivation area (Photo Exhibits A & B).

In addition, the topography from Mike's cultivation area to the park's main public parking area includes a change of elevation of ~99 feet above the area of his property where the 50 outdoor plants are cultivated (see Aerial Exhibit). The exhibits also illustrate that there are no public areas, including trails, with access or views of his property anywhere in the park due to the dense tree canopy.

In response to the fires of 2017, Mike has recently paid for park a removal of excess vegetation across the road from his property (with park permission) to create a fire break (items 1 and 2 on Exhibit B), while leaving the "separation" vegetation intact that rises up the slope.

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## **Biodynamic Cultivation/Farming Method**

In his quest to obtain the purest form of cannabis for his medical needs, he turned to biodynamic (BD) farming techniques that were very successful for his former Benziger Family Winery. The use of BD cannabis, free from contaminants, helped to reduce his anxiety and pain from the disease and treatments he underwent. As a result, he wanted to be able to share his harvest with others through dispensaries and entered the medical cannabis marketplace established under the previous state medical regulatory program.

Biodynamics is considered by many to be the most advanced form of organic farming. It eliminates chemicals and creates ultra-pure products, while regenerating the soil. BD creates its own unique biology above and below the soil. No artificial chemicals or inputs are allowed. Instead, areas are planted to attract beneficial insects and organisms known as insectaries to naturally manage potential pests along with the use of organic substances such as Neem Oil or other natural products that are authorized for use.

In 2005, when Mike was CEO, Benziger Family Winery became the first Demeter Certified Biodynamic winery in Sonoma County. In 2015, while under the medical collective/cooperative model, his 50 outdoor plants also received the first of only 2 Demeter Certifications in the nation for cannabis, and still is certified. Under the previous medical cannabis rules, Mike provided compassionate medical cannabis donations for patients in need through organizations and he is looking forward to continuing practice once permitted and licensed.

In addition to cultivating cannabis, his Glentucky Family Farm generates 20-40 lbs. or more per week of BD Certified vegetables and fruits in the winter and more than 50lbs. in the summer for restaurants, local families and themselves.

Glentucky Family Farm's mission is to "Grow Food and medicinal crops that are pure and authentic to this location, which have the potential to heal the body and restore health to the soil and the environment."

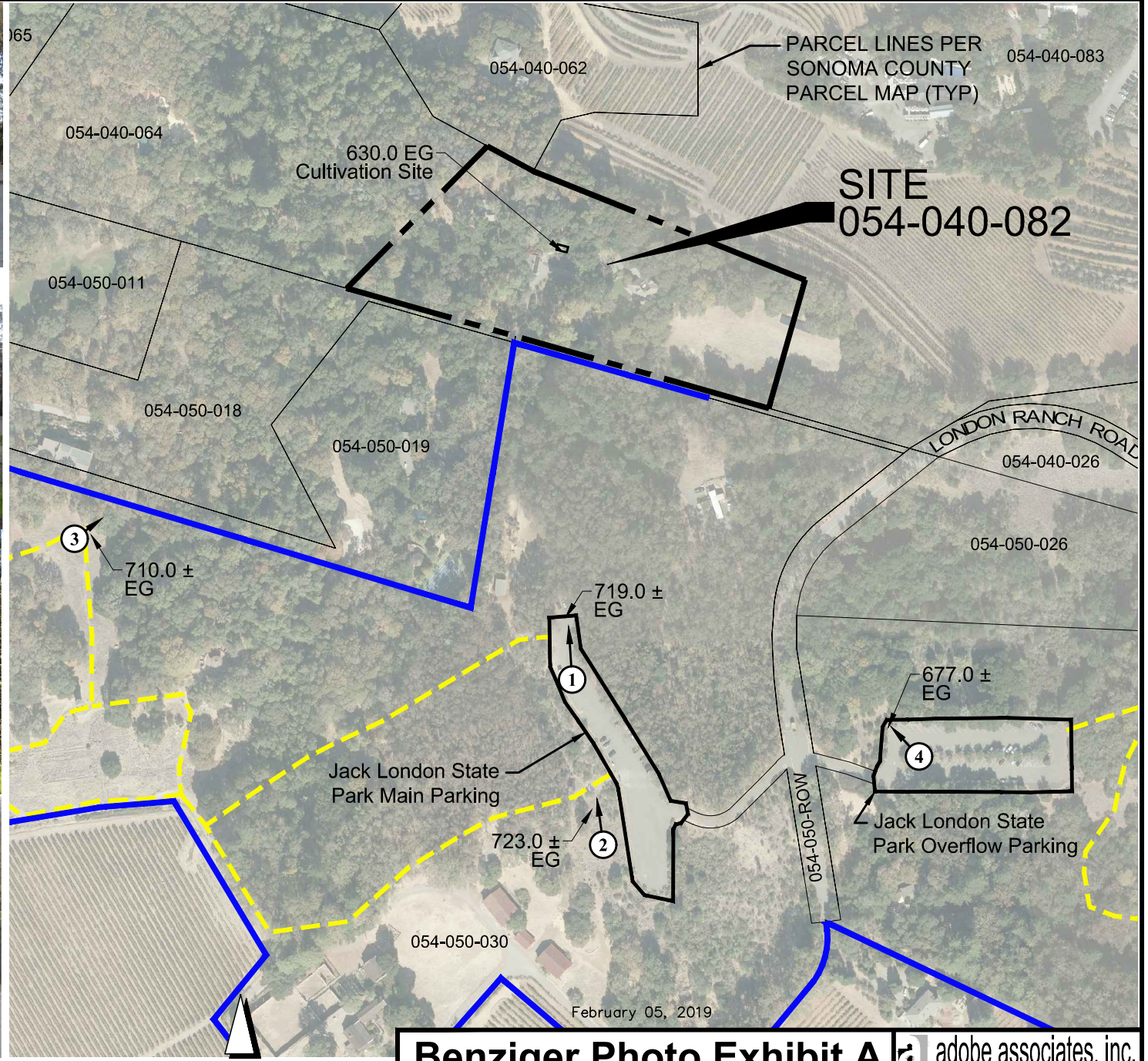
## **Water/power/composting**

In addition to the biodynamic farming practices, all of the water used for the indoor and outdoor cannabis cultivation is harvested rainwater utilizing soil sensors and drip irrigation. He has the storage capacity for 25,500gallons of rainwater and generates enough solar power for cannabis and his home, besides being connected to Sonoma Clean Power Evergreen for any additional power needs. All cannabis materials are composted on site as prescribed in the ordinance and by the state CDFA. The prevailing winds carry any odor over the next door vineyards of Benziger Winery.

## **State License Status**

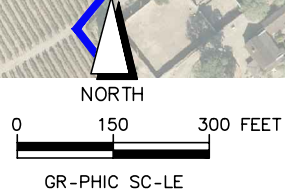
Currently Mike has Temporary State Licenses for his Specialty Cottage Indoor Cultivation and Specialty Outdoor and has filed his Annual State applications, which are deemed complete by California Department of Food and Agriculture except for the local CUP authorization.

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— Park Boundary —

- - - Park Trails - - -



**Benziger Photo Exhibit A**

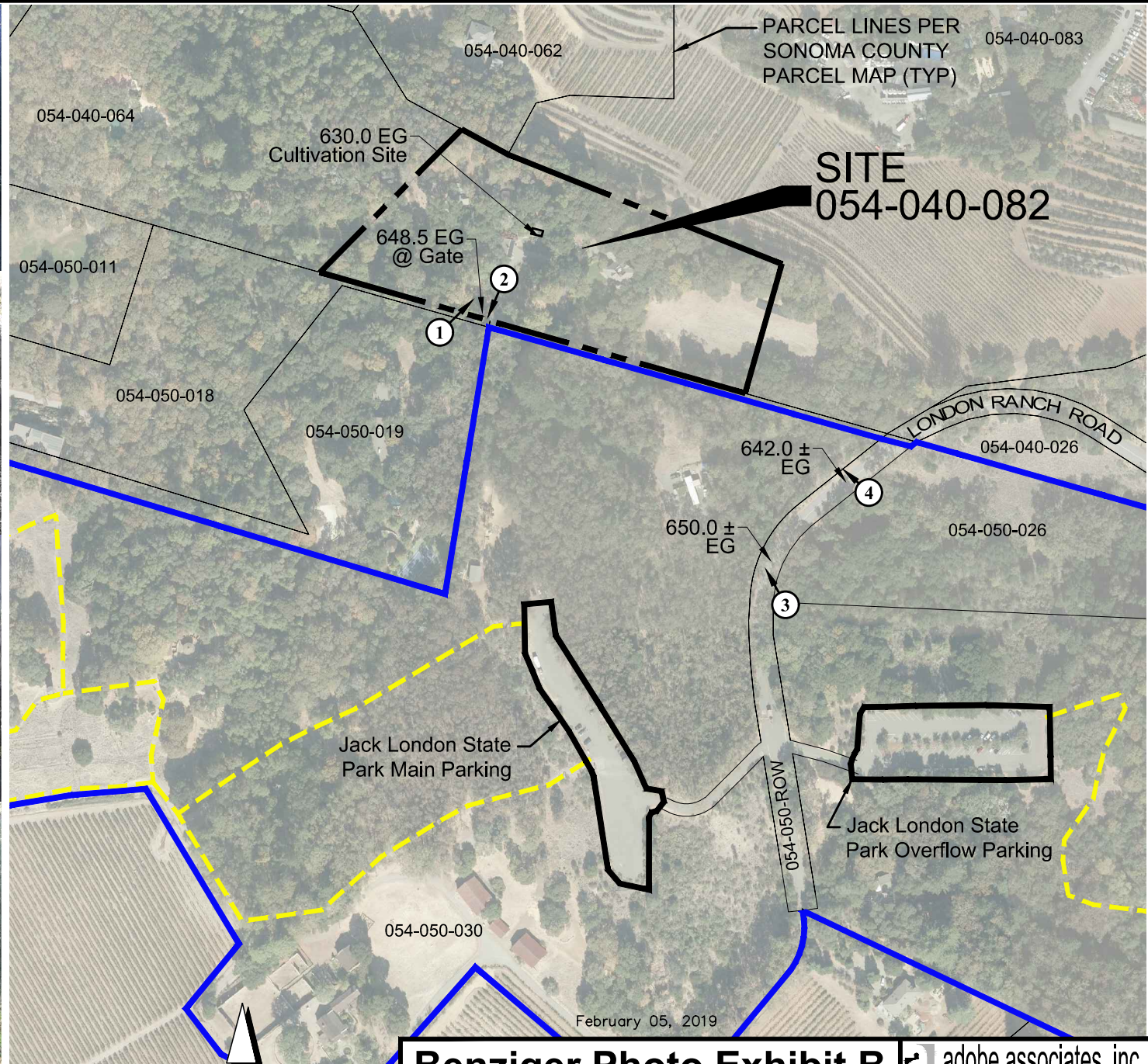
Mike Benziger  
2211 London Ranch Road, Glen Ellen, CA  
APN 054-040-082, 083

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**Benziger Photo Exhibit B**

Mike Benziger  
2211 London Ranch Road, Glen Ellen, CA  
APN 054-040-082, 083

February 05, 2019

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— Park Boundary —

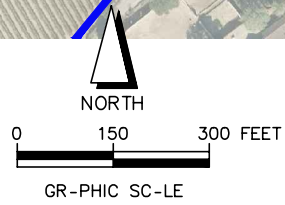
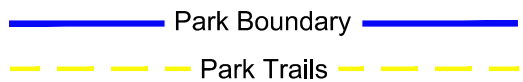
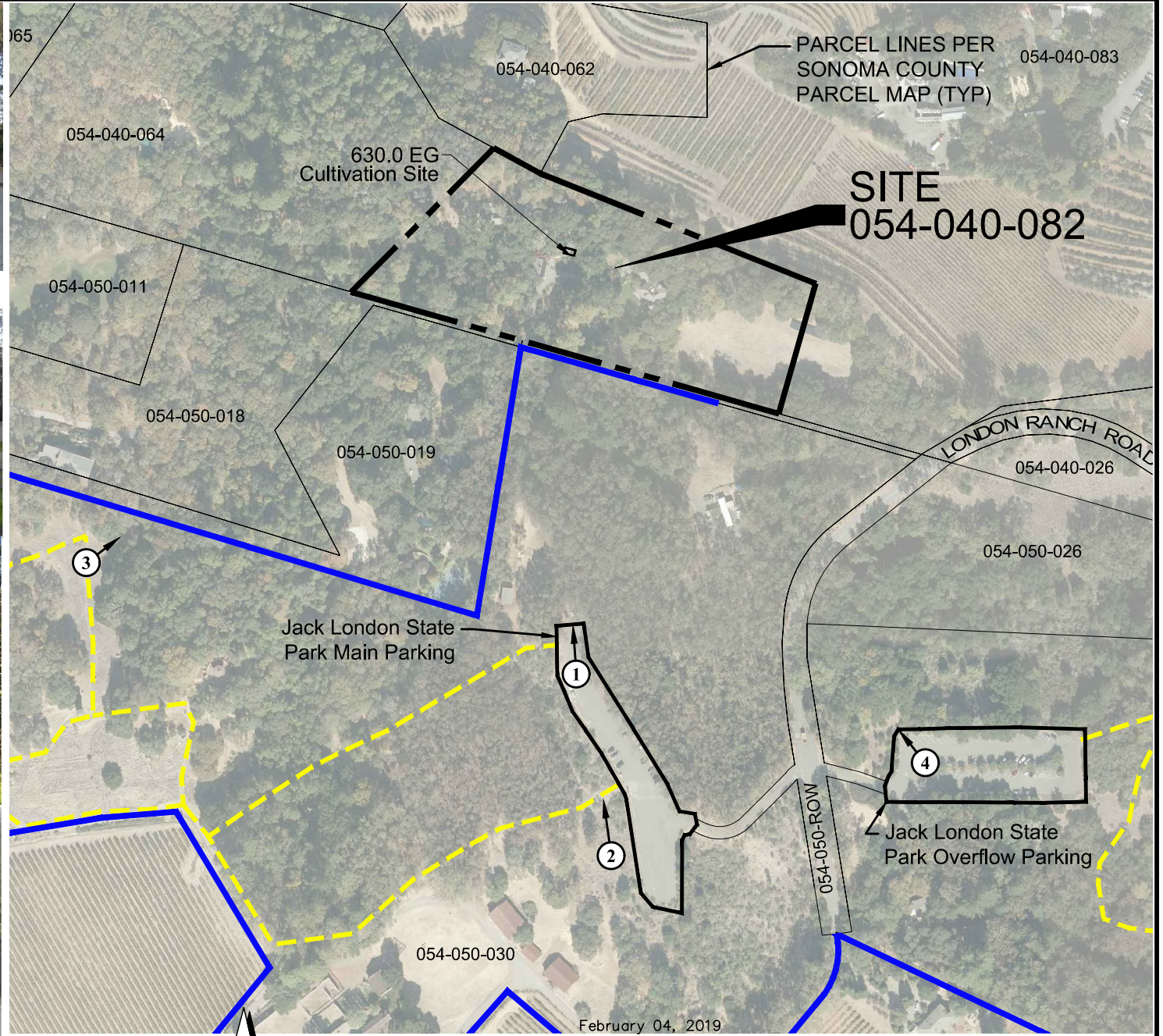
- - - Park Trails - - -

NORTH

0 150 300 FEET

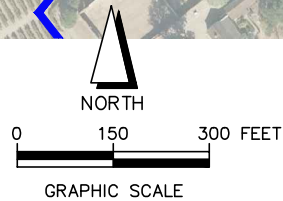
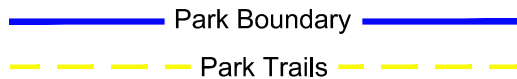
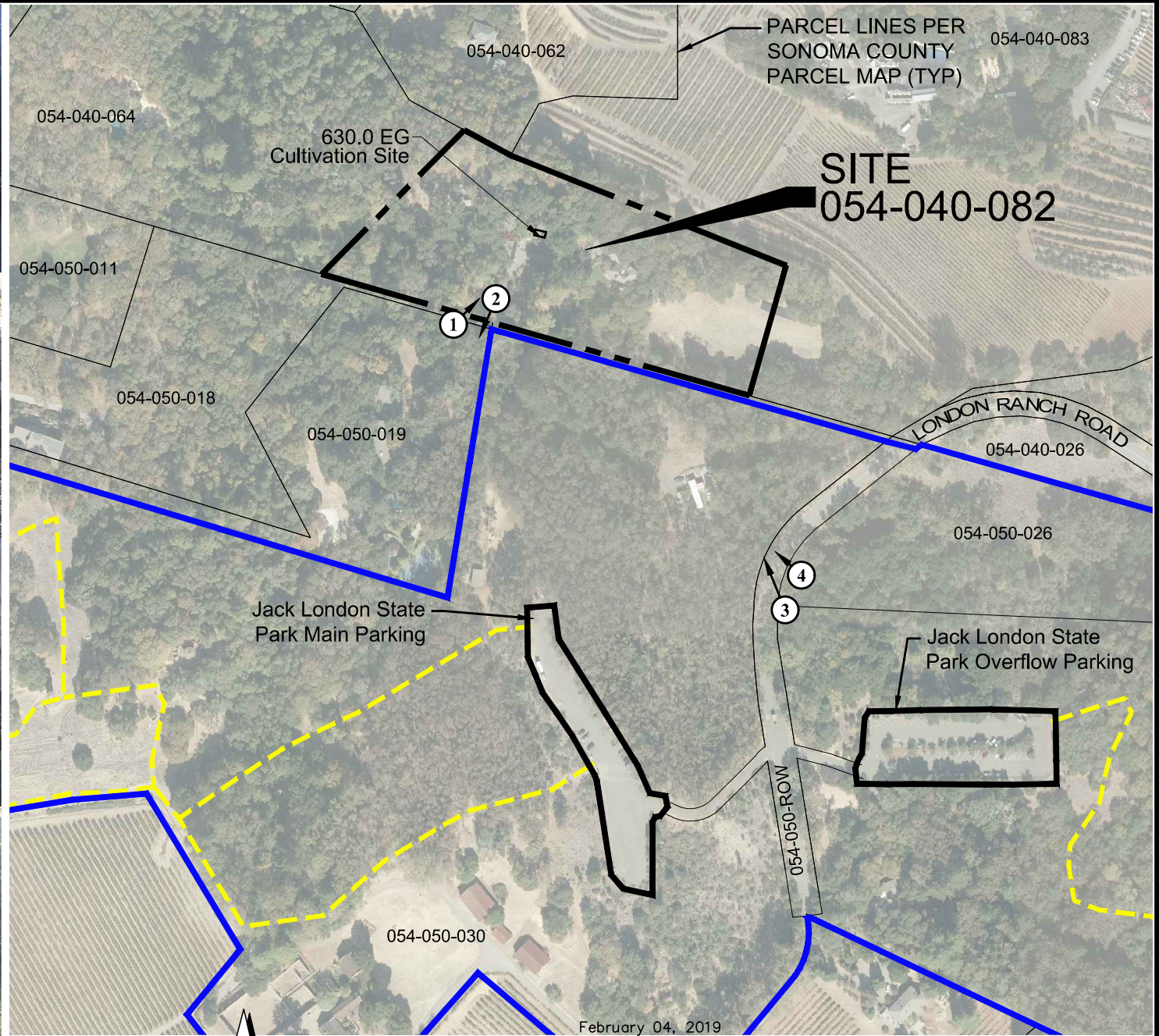
GR-PHIC SC-LE

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<p><b>Benziger Photo Exhibit</b></p> <p>Mike Benziger 2211 London Ranch Road, Glen Ellen, CA APN 054-040-082, 083</p>	<p><b>adobe associates, inc.</b> civil engineering   land surveying   wastewater</p> <p>1220 N. Dutton Ave., Santa Rosa, CA 95401 P. (707) 541-2300 F. (707) 541-2301 Website: www.adobeinc.com</p> <p>"A Service You Can Count On!"</p>
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# Benziger Photo Exhibit

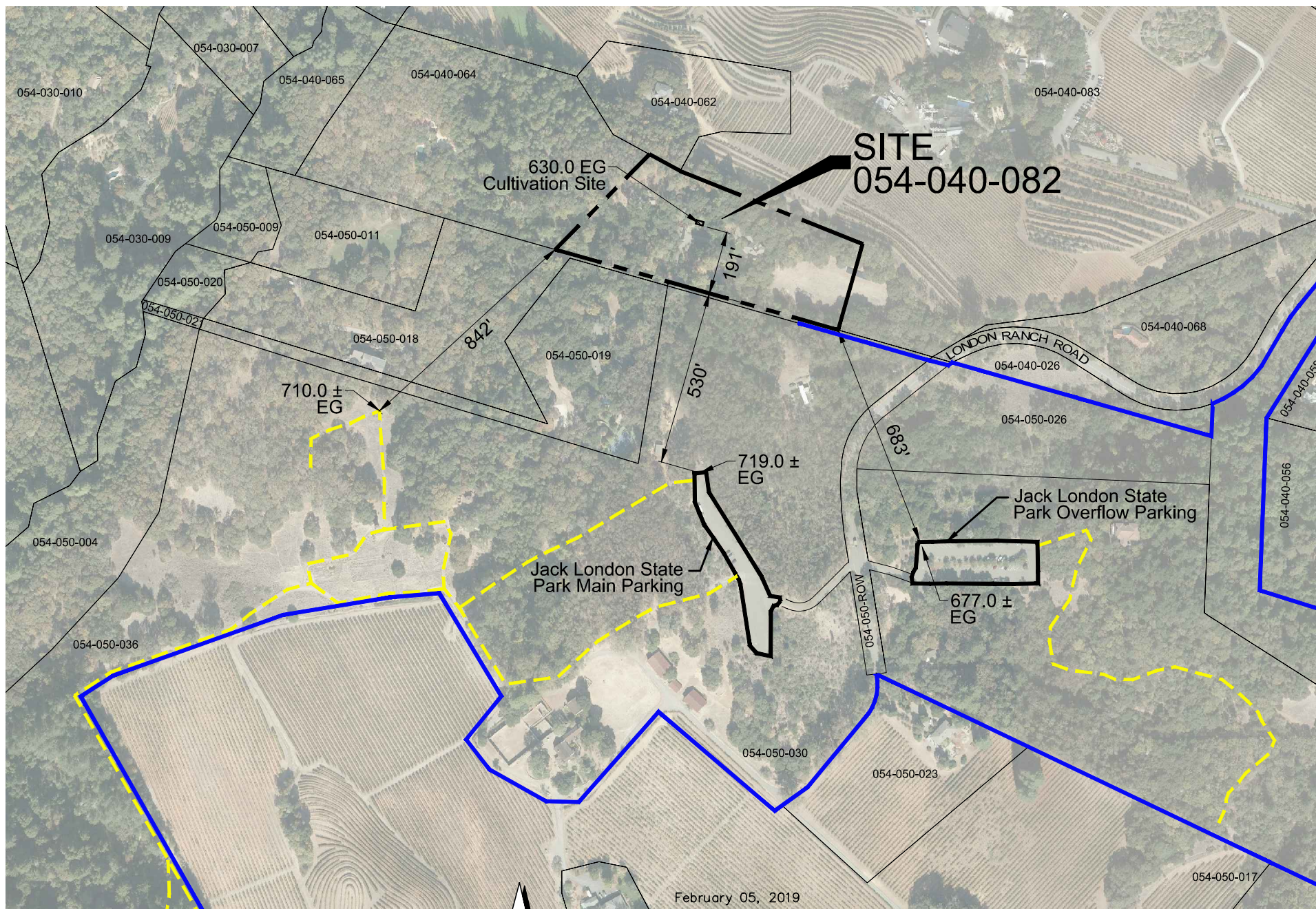
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February 05, 2019

Parcels (per sonoma county parcel map)

**— Park Boundary —**

**- - - Park Trails - - -**

NORTH

0 200 400 FEET

GR-PHIC SC-LE

**Benziger Aerial Exhibit**

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