

#1



COUNTY OF LAKE
Board of Supervisors
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Lakeport, California 95453
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Ed Robey
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Jeff Smith
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Anthony W. Farrington
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November 26, 2002

Chief, Regulations Division
Bureau of ATF
P.O. Box 50221
Washington, D.C. 20091-0221
Attn: Notice #961

The Lake County Board of Supervisors strongly supports the proposal to establish a Red Hills District Viticultural Area in Lake County, California. The proposal was discussed in detail during our Board meeting of November 26, 2002.

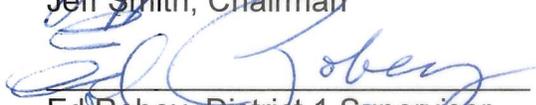
The proposed appellation's hilly terrain creates a distinctive microclimate, enhanced by the area's proximity to Clear Lake, which also distinguishes this area from the surrounding region. It is a geographically unique grape growing region as defined in 27 CFR 4.25a(e)(1). In order to enable wineries to designate grapes originating from this unique area, so that consumers may make informed decisions as to the wines they purchase, it is appropriate that the Red Hills District be established as an American Viticultural Area in accordance with 27 CFR Part 9.

Sincerely,

Lake County Board of Supervisors



Jeff Smith, Chairman



Ed Robey, District 1 Supervisor



Gary Lewis, District 2 Supervisor



Anthony Farrington,
District 4 Supervisor



Rob Brown, District 5 Supervisor

BARBARA SNIDER

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December 23, 2002

Nancy Sutton
Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco & Firearms
P.O. Box 4644
Petaluma, CA 94955

Re: Response to ATF Request for Comments - ATF Notice No. 961

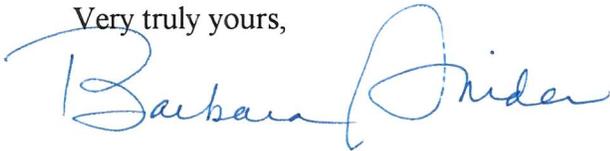
Dear Nancy:

Enclosed are two copies of Comments for filing regarding the ATF's request for Comments on the possible name confusion between the "Red Hills" AVA in California and the "Red Hill" AVA in Oregon.

Also enclosed for your information is the latest article I mentioned from *Forbes* magazine regarding Andy Beckstoffer and his vineyards in the Red Hills (Lake County). Please feel free to contact me if you would like me to forward copies of any of the other articles mentioned in the Comments.

I will be out of town through Christmas, but will be back at the end of the week. Please feel to call me on my cellphone if you need to discuss any of the Comments we have filed in the past few days.

Very truly yours,



Barbara Snider

enclosure - Response to ATF Request for Comments on ATF Notice No. 961.
Copy of *Forbes* Magazine Article

BEFORE THE DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms

Snider Vineyards

**RESPONSE TO ATF REQUEST FOR COMMENTS
ATF NOTICE NO. 961**

December 23, 2002

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BEFORE THE DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms

**RESPONSE TO ATF REQUEST FOR COMMENTS
ATF NOTICE NO. 961**

Snider Vineyards submits this Response to ATF's Request for Comments as set forth in Notice No. 961 (RIN 1512-AC66), Red Hills (California) Viticultural Area (2001R-330P) published October 30, 2002 in 67 Fed.Reg.66083. Notice 961 describes a Petition filed to establish a new viticultural area, the Red Hills AVA, in Lake County, California. The Notice further refers to a similar petition being filed on behalf of grape growers in Oregon, seeking to use the name "Red Hill" and raises the concern regarding the potential for name confusion between the two names - Red Hills (plural) in California and Red Hill (singular) in Oregon.

Snider Vineyards has an interest in the specific name of the appellation because it owns and operates vineyards in the Red Hills area and has filed companion Comments on ATF Notice No. 961 with evidence supporting its request that the proposed boundaries be drawn to assure its Fortress Vineyard be included within the new AVA. These Comments are submitted, therefore, as an interested party.

1. ATF Proposal For Resolution of the Potential Name Confusion Between Red Hills AVA in California and Red Hill AVA in Oregon.

In an effort to resolve the potential problem of confusion because of the similarity between "Red Hills" and "Red Hill", ATF stated it is considering using the names "Red Hills-California" and "Red Hill - Oregon" for these respective viticultural areas and requested comments on this proposal. For the reasons stated below, Snider Vineyards does not agree that "Red Hills-California" is either a satisfactory or appropriate solution for the California designation and submits that "Red Hills - Lake County" for the California viticultural area would be a far more accurate and appropriate solution for avoiding name confusion between the two viticultural areas.

1. The Use of the Name “Red Hills - California” Will Undermine the Primary Purpose of the AVA to Distinguish Viticultural Areas.

The ATF has been authorized to approve American Viticultural Areas (AVAs) since 1979. A primary purpose in establishing an AVA is that the more specific designation can be used in wine labeling and advertising allowing wine consumers to make better informed purchasing decisions based on information regarding the specific areas where grapes used to make the wines are grown. Before an AVA is approved, the petitioners must demonstrate that the growing region is distinguishable from the surrounding areas by way of climate, soil, elevation, and other physical features. Consumers are increasingly becoming aware of the differences and distinguishing characteristics between AVAs as they are increasingly used in wine labeling.

ATF rules for using an appellation of origin on wine labels begin at the very generic level down to very specific designations if the wine meets the more specific ATF labeling criteria. Thus, a wine using the more generic state designation, “California”, suggests to the consumer that the grapes used to make that wine could be grown anywhere in the State, and many times, grown in many different areas of the State and blended. The next more specific level is to distinguish a wine by region (such as the North Coast region of California) or by county, indicating to the consumer that the grapes grown to make that wine come from only that specific region or county. The next step is to distinguish a wine by using an approved AVA designation if applicable, and the final, most specific designation, of course, is by individual vineyard.

After many years of careful marketing, the wine consumer has learned to distinguish wines based in large part on the characteristics and quality of the viticultural areas where the grapes were grown. And although ATF approval of an AVA is not considered an endorsement or approval of the quality of wine produced in the area, premium wineries in those areas have increasingly sought to distinguish their products and quality from others based on the use of a more specific appellation designation on their labels. Thus, over the years, wine consumers have learned to recognize specific wines from specific areas and associate certain quality and

characteristics of the wines from these different areas. In contrast, wine that is labeled with only the generic “California” appellation does not provide the consumers with the same degree of information upon which to base their purchasing decisions. A “California” wine could mean the grapes come from any place within the state, and most likely, from several different growing areas within the state and such labeling provides no distinguishing information.

Snider Vineyards submits that because the pattern of marketing wines and growing consumer awareness of California growing areas over the years, attaching the name “California” to the “Red Hills” could tend to produce confusion rather than clarification because it could tend to cause the consumer to recognize the AVA as a generic “California” wine rather than a wine from a specific AVA. Such a result would clearly undermine the purpose of establishing an AVA in the first place which is to distinguish the wine from other growing areas.

However, it is clear that the ATF’s concern that the similarity in proposed names for the two AVAs could cause consumer confusion is a real concern. A possible way to resolve this problem is to use the more specific Lake County name in conjunction with the Red Hills (California) which would provide the consumer with more precise information. Lake County is becoming much more recognized as a growing region as part of the larger North Coast area. Thus using the name “Red Hills- Lake County” would provide the consumer with much more specific information than by using the generic “California” designation.

2. Lake County Is Becoming Increasingly Well-Known As A Distinct Viticultural Area In California.

Over the past years, the wine industry in Lake County has undergone significant growth and wine industry publications are publishing an increasing number of articles regarding Lake County as a growth area of the North Coast AVA. A sample of some of the articles discussing the Lake County wine industry in general, and the Red Hills area in more particularity is as follows:

- a. "Red Soil, Red Grapes, but not Red Ink", Dan Clarke, *Wines & Vines*, February, 1998.
- b. "Beckstoffer Vineyards", Gerald D. Boyd, *Vineyard & Winery Management*, March/April, 1999.
- c. "Lake County Bears Fruit - California's Lesser-Known North Coast County Gets Respect", Scott Ferguson, *Wine Business Monthly*, May, 2000.
- d. "Lake County Sees Economic Growth", Ucilia Wang, *Santa Rosa Press Democrat*, June 11, 2000.
- e. "Value Vineyards? Growers Bet on Future of Lake County", *Vineyard & Winery Management*, November/December, 2000.
- f. "More Vineyards, Four New Wineries Slated for Lake County", Scott Ferguson, *St. Helena Star*, July 5, 2001.
- g. "Grape Grower - Andy Beckstoffer", Cyril Penn, *Wine Business Monthly*, May, 2002.
- h. "The Appellation Trail", Quentin Hardy, *Forbes*, September 16, 2002.

Although each of these articles discusses different aspects of the wine business in Lake County, every article has one thing in common with the other - before the article refers to the "Red Hills" growing area, each article first discusses the Lake County wine industry and the Red Hills area only later, as a part of the overall Lake County wine business. Thus, Lake County and "Red Hills" are names that have already become closely associated with the other in the press and as presented to consumers. It only makes sense, then, since the association between the names has already been established in publications, for the ATF to use the name "Lake County" to distinguish the California Red Hills AVA from the Oregon Red Hill AVA.

Further, it should be pointed out that California has well over 100 specific AVA designations and not one of the already approved AVAs has the additional name "California" attached to it. Consumers of California wine have become accustomed to the use of the designation as "California" to mean "generic" and look for more specific designations by county, AVA, or individual vineyard designation for more precise information. Using the "Red Hills - California" designation could clearly cause confusion and would place an unfair marketing burden on those growers and wineries in the Red Hills area to have to try "re-educate" the consumer to understand that the "California" in conjunction with the name "Red Hill" is different than in all other situations and in this one instance, does not mean "generic". This could be an insurmountable problem for the growers and wineries and is not necessary. The ATF should avoid placing this unfair burden on this growing area by using the more specific designation - "Red Hills - Lake County".

CONCLUSION

For the reasons stated above, Snider Vineyards submits that the ATF should distinguish the Red Hills viticultural area in California with name "Red Hills - Lake County". The Red Hills viticultural area has already been extensively associated with Lake County in industry publications. Using the Lake County appellation in conjunction with the Red Hills area is a natural conclusion and would avoid the consumer confusion that could occur by using the more generic "California" appellation in conjunction with the growing area name.

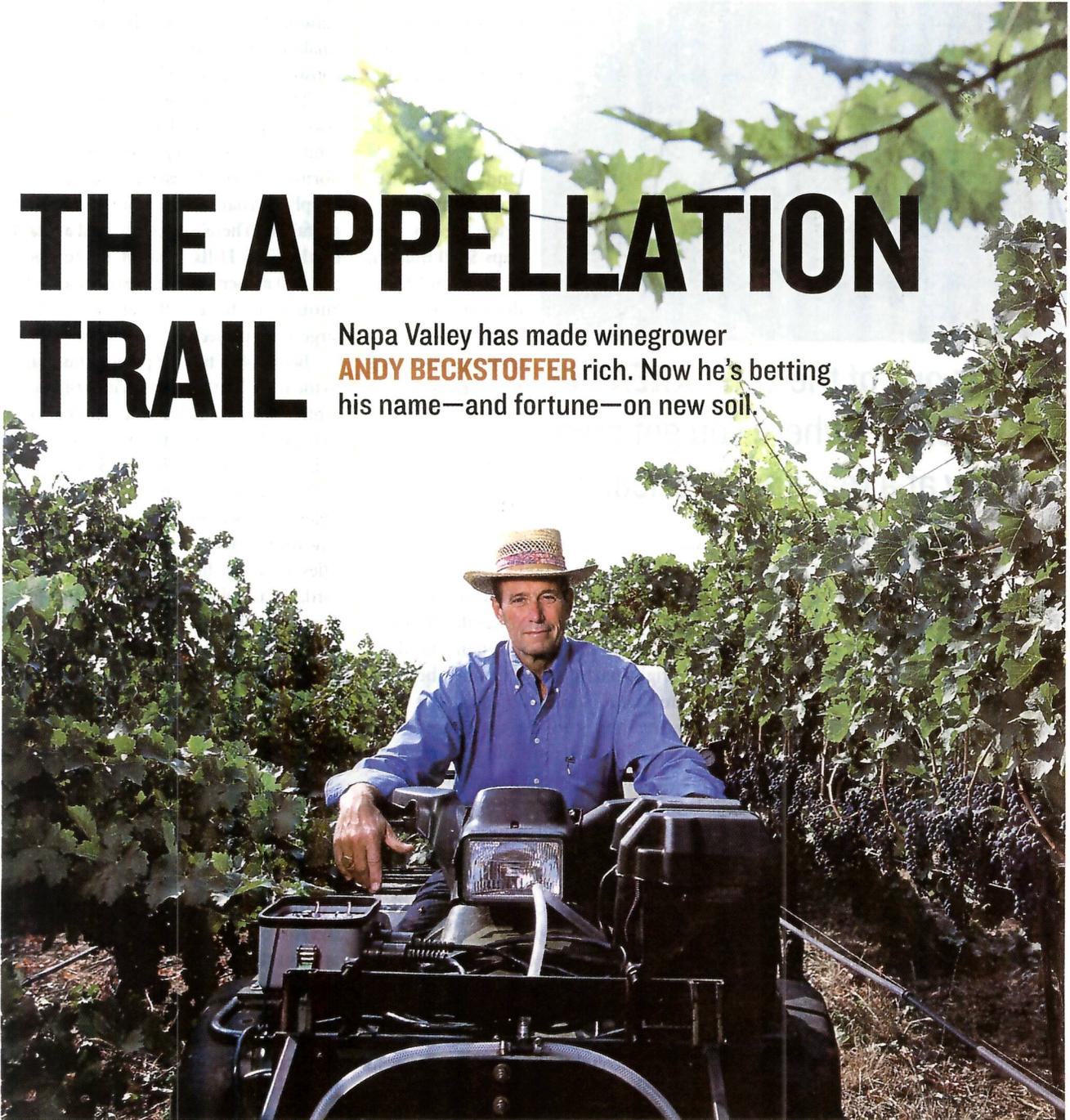
Respectfully submitted this 23rd day of December, 2002.



Barbara Snider
Snider Vineyards

THE APPELLATION TRAIL

Napa Valley has made winegrower **ANDY BECKSTOFFER** rich. Now he's betting his name—and fortune—on new soil.



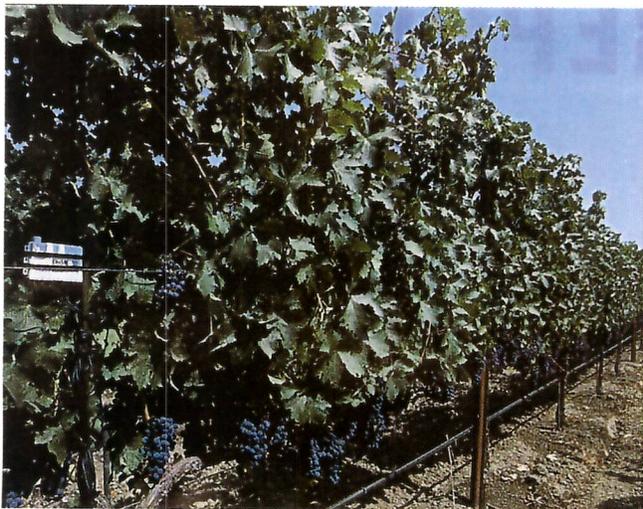
BY QUENTIN HARDY

A TOUGH YEAR IN A HARDSCRAB-ble market may be just the time to expand. Which is why William Andrew (Andy) Beckstoffer, the grand old man of Napa Valley grape growers, is spending \$25 million—and not on familiar soil. “We’re Napa people, but the quality here is just so

much better,” says Beckstoffer, striding his red-dirt and obsidian hillside in nearby Lake County. He hopes his 1,000-acre spread—30 miles and several income levels from the Napa border—will be the center of a new wine appellation, like Carneros in Napa or Margaux in France.

The expansion comes at a time of softening grape prices and a market worried

about consumer demand. Beckstoffer, 62, calls it “the riskiest thing I’ve ever done.” If it works, it could spark a boom in a region of pear orchards and bulk grapes—where the land goes for one-twentieth the price of a Napa parcel just to the south. It will also bootstrap the fortunes of Beckstoffer Family Vineyards, his holding company (2001 sales: \$26 million). Now Lake is “an eco-



“This is one of the LAST AREAS IN CALIFORNIA where you get great quality at a reasonable price.”

conomic ghetto,” the grower says. (The county’s median household income is 61% that of Napa’s.) “It will be wine country ... fashionable.”

Hard to believe, in a county with 4 wineries to Napa’s 250 and with none of Napa’s exclusive restaurants and posh inns. But Beckstoffer figures that even if the market collapses from a glut or a sour economy, he can still supply fruit for \$12 bottles—up to 500,000 cases a year by 2008 when his vines are fully producing—and still make a profit.

He should know. Beckstoffer came to Napa in 1969, a dicey time, with an M.B.A. from Dartmouth’s Tuck school. He worked in vineyard management for Heublein—he convinced the company to get into winemaking—at the start of the region’s explosion and the height of the grape boycotts. His wine cellar boasts an empty Inglenook bottle signed by labor leader Cesar Chavez, drunk the night they settled years of labor dispute.

His first independent venture, in 1973, nearly buried him. Taking out an adjustable \$6 million loan that started at 7%, Beckstoffer got nailed by stagflation, as cabernet prices fell to \$400 a ton from \$800 in one year, and interest rates jumped, peaking at 15%. Heublein, which still needed grapes, snatched back his land

suitable land at \$10,000 an acre, compared with Napa’s \$200,000 acres. Beckstoffer and his neighbors, which include Beringer Blass Wine Estates and Kendall-Jackson, have figured out that a certain altitude in the right part of Lake County, between about 2,000 and 2,400 feet, has a daily heating and cooling cycle similar to Napa’s. Find the right hill with access to water, and it’s a winner. Another advantage in Lake County is the absence of the glassy-winged sharpshooter, an insect that’s plaguing growers in Napa and Sonoma counties. It spreads Pierce’s disease, caused by a bacterium capable of ruining a vineyard in one season.

Good grapes are one thing. More than ever the wine business is about marketing, and now that starts with growers. Beckstoffer and others have petitioned the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms to designate their patches “the Red Hills District.” The appellation sets the hills apart from low-quality cabernet grown on nearby flatland. Chalone Wine Group, a \$43 million (sales) public company producing an annual 600,000 cases of wine from small estates charging anywhere from \$9 to \$75 a bottle, uses Red Hills grapes for much of its Dynamite Vineyards cabernet, which costs \$15 to \$17 a bottle. Dynamite is made in Sonoma now, but Chalone is re-

and kept him on as a contract farmer. It took him five years to clear the debt. Thanks to a boom in demand for quality U.S. wine, and a buy-and-hold ethic for good land, Beckstoffer now owns 3,000 acres, worth perhaps \$200 million, in Napa and Mendocino counties. His grapes go into 50 wines, including the Beringer, Merryvale and Stag’s Leap labels.

His secret for the Lake project isn’t just finding

locating the winery to 48 acres it purchased in Lake. “This is one of the last areas in California where you can get great quality at a reasonable price,” says Thomas Selfridge, Chalone’s president. “The key is developing consumer acceptance.”

The guys who have land in Lake may also want the appellation as a means to limit competition. A planting rush in California’s Central Coast has meant an oversupply of chardonnay from there. Prices are falling. There’s still some land available in the Red Hills area, at up to about \$15,000 an acre. But few parcels seem big enough, or have sufficient water, for a large-scale project.

Beckstoffer ties the price of his grapes to the retail bottle’s price. With a bigger incentive to hit the \$25-a-bottle mark, a lot of technology goes into the new vineyard, all of it geared to optimizing handcrafted wine with the tools of big farming. While a computer-equipped minitractor drives between vine rows, a global positioning system identifies scores of different areas in the vineyard, in case winemakers want grapes from one particular part of the hill. Sensors monitor water levels at 45 points. Areas low on water get extra irrigation. Another sensor on the side of the tractor spots budding weeds and zaps them with a minimal amount of herbicide.

The tractor crosses dry broom, barley and clover grasses, brought in to aid development of the grapevine’s roots, forcing them to search deep in the ground for water early in the season. (The grasses suck up the surface water in the early spring, then die off during the dry summer.) Vines are also stretched on wires and thinned of leaves, so fruit is stressed over vegetation growth. Such techniques have made it possible for Napa and other wine-growing regions to produce an increasing number of high-priced wines.

But the high end may prove a victim of its own success. Between the bear market and terrorism’s disastrous effect on travel, expensive wines are feeling squeezed. “The \$70 to \$100 bottle has definitely slowed down,” says Chalone’s Selfridge. Which still leaves plenty of room for stuff that goes for \$12 or more a pop—and plenty of potential new business for growers like Beckstoffer.

supplemental - original

BARBARA SNIDER

62 Lucky Drive, Greenbrae, CA 94904

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December 20, 2002

Via Express Mail

Nancy Sutton
Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco & Firearms
P.O. Box 4644
Petaluma, CA 94955

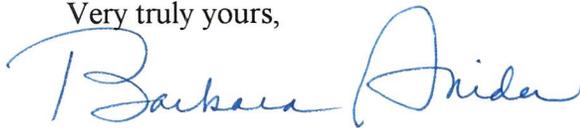
Re: Supplemental Comments on ATF Notice No. 961, Red Hills AVA, Lake County, California

Dear Nancy:

I appreciate the time you spent with me last week reviewing the pending petition to establish an AVA for the Red Hills in Lake County. As a follow-up to our discussion, I am forwarding the enclosed Supplemental Comments. The attachments to these Supplemental Comments provide specific detailed information and data related to the soils in the Red Hills AVA and on the Fortress Vineyard. Attachments 3 and 4 provide detailed information on the soil types from the Soil Survey of Lake County, May, 1989 and Attachment 5 are photos of the Fortress Vineyard when it was being cleared for planting depicting the distinct red soil on the vineyard.

Please feel free to call me if ATF has any further questions regarding Snider Vineyards' request that its Fortress Vineyard be included within the boundaries of the new Red Hills AVA. Please also note that Snider Vineyards is submitting a Response to the ATF's request for Comments relating to how best distinguish between the Red Hill AVA in Oregon and the Red Hills AVA in California under separate cover.

Very truly yours,



Barbara Snider

enclosure: Supplemental Comments on Notice No. 961

BEFORE THE DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms

Snider Vineyards

SUPPLEMENTAL COMMENTS ON NOTICE NO. 961

December 23, 2002

Barbara Snider
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BEFORE THE DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms

SUPPLEMENTAL COMMENTS ON NOTICE NO. 961

Snider Vineyards hereby submits these Supplemental Comments on ATF Notice No. 961 to the Comments it initially filed December 11, 2002. The purpose of these Supplemental Comments is to provide additional information to the ATF in support of Snider Vineyard's request that the boundaries for the proposed Red Hills AVA in Lake County, California are drawn so as to include Snider Vineyards' "Fortress Vineyard".

The predominant soils in the proposed Red Hills AVA boundaries are soil types # 112, #113, and 117 as set forth in the Soil Survey of Lake County, May, 1989. Soil type #112 is described as the "Benridge-Konocti association 12 to 30 percent slopes". Unit #112 is comprised of 40 percent Benridge loam, 20 percent Konocti cobbly loam, and 20 percent Konocti stony loam. Soil type #113 is described as the "Benridge-Konocti association, 30 to 50 percent slopes". Unit #113 is comprised of 40 percent Benridge loam, 30 percent Konocti cobbly loam, and 15 percent Konocti stony loam. Soil type #117 is described as the "Bottlerock-Glenview-Arrowhead complex, 5 to 30 percent slopes". Unit #117 is comprised of about 50 percent Bottlerock extremely gravelly loam, 20 percent Glenview very gravelly loam, and 15 percent Arrowhead extremely gravelly sandy loam.¹

Attachment 3 to these Comments is a excerpt of those sections of the Soil Survey that provide a detailed description of each of these soil types.

Attachment 4 to these Comments contains an excerpt from the Soil Survey providing general descriptions of the three predominant soil types in the proposed Red Hills AVA: the Benridge, Bottlerock, and Konocti Series. The description for the Benridge Series specifically notes that the color for section A-1 (the top 0 to 6 inches) is "reddish brown", thus giving the soils in the Red Hills AVA their characteristic "red" color. All of these soils types are well-drained volcanic soils.

As described in the initial Comments, the Fortress Vineyard soils are comprised primarily

¹Source: Soil Survey of Lake County, May 1989, pp. 25 -30.

of soil type #113 as described on the Soil Survey of Lake County, May, 1989 map (the Benridge-Konocti association, 30 to 50 percent slopes). This is one of the predominant soils in the proposed Red Hills AVA and, because it is comprised of 40 percent Benridge loam, the soil has the characteristic red color as well as the volcanic, well-draining properties.

Attachment 5 to these Supplemental Comments contains five photos of the various blocks of the Fortress Vineyard when the land was being cleared for planting. Photo #1 shows the relationship of Benson Ridge where the Fortress Vineyard is located to the lake and the land-lake effect on the vineyard which is characteristic of the Red Hills AVA climate. Photos # 2-5 show the red soils on the Fortress Vineyard.

For the reasons stated in its initial Comments (filed December 11, 2002) and these Supplemental Comments, Snider Vineyards submits that its Fortress Vineyard has all of the characteristics of the proposed Red Hills AVA as described in ATF Notice No. 961 and therefore, requests ATF extend the western boundary of the proposed AVA to include the Fortress Vineyard.

Respectfully submitted this 23rd day of December, 2002.



Barbara Snider
Snider Vineyards

**Snider Vineyards
Supplemental Comments To ATF Notice No. 961**

ATTACHMENT 3

SOILS

Pages 25 - 27 and 29-31

**The Soil Survey of Lake County
May, 1989**

Excerpt from:
Soil Survey of Lake County
May, 1989

25

Lake County, California

temperature is 49 to 55 degrees F, and the average frost-free period is 120 to 180 days.

This unit is about 30 percent Bamtush gravelly loam, 30 percent Speaker gravelly loam, and 15 percent Sanhedrin gravelly loam. The components of this unit are so intricately intermingled that it was not practical to map them separately at the scale used.

Included in this unit are small areas of Deadwood, Kekawaka, Marpa, and Neuns soils and Rock outcrop. Also included are small areas of Bamtush, Speaker, and Sanhedrin soils that have slopes of less than 50 percent. Included areas make up about 25 percent of the total acreage. The percentage varies from one area to another.

The Bamtush soil is very deep and well drained. It formed in material weathered from sandstone. Typically, the surface is covered with a mat of partially decomposed needles, leaves, bark, and twigs 1 inch thick. The surface layer is brown gravelly loam 7 inches thick. The upper 10 inches of the subsoil is brown very gravelly loam, and the lower 46 inches is strong brown very gravelly loam.

Permeability of the Bamtush soil is moderate. Available water capacity is 5.0 to 7.5 inches. Effective rooting depth is more than 60 inches. Surface runoff is very rapid, and the hazard of erosion is severe.

The Speaker soil is moderately deep and well drained. It formed in material weathered from sandstone. Typically, the surface is covered with a mat of partially decomposed needles, leaves, and twigs 1 inch thick. The surface layer is brown gravelly loam 2 inches thick. The upper 6 inches of the subsoil is reddish yellow gravelly loam, and the lower 19 inches is reddish yellow clay loam. Soft sandstone is at a depth of 27 inches.

Permeability of the Speaker soil is moderately slow. Available water capacity is 2 to 6 inches. Effective rooting depth is 20 to 40 inches. Surface runoff is very rapid, and the hazard of erosion is severe.

The Sanhedrin soil is deep and well drained. It formed in material weathered from sandstone. Typically, the surface is covered with a mat of partially decomposed needles, leaves, bark, and twigs about 2 inches thick. The upper part of the surface layer is brown gravelly loam 4 inches thick, and the lower part is pale brown gravelly loam 4 inches thick. The upper 33 inches of the subsoil is light yellowish brown and reddish yellow gravelly loam, and the lower 16 inches is reddish yellow gravelly clay loam. Sandstone is at a depth of 57 inches.

Permeability of the Sanhedrin soil is moderately slow. Available water capacity is 4 to 8 inches. Effective rooting depth is 40 to 60 inches. Surface runoff is very rapid, and the hazard of erosion is severe.

This unit is used mainly for timber production, wildlife habitat, and watershed.

Douglas-fir, ponderosa pine, California black oak, and Pacific madrone are the main tree species on this unit. On the basis of a 100-year site curve, the mean site

index for Douglas-fir is 134 on the Bamtush soil, 107 on the Speaker soil, and 121 on the Sanhedrin soil. On the basis of a 100-year site curve, the mean site index for ponderosa pine is 139 on the Bamtush soil, 106 on the Speaker soil, and 116 on the Sanhedrin soil. The potential annual production of ponderosa pine on the Bamtush soil is 830 board feet per acre from a fully stocked stand of trees. The potential annual production of ponderosa pine on the Speaker soil is 425 board feet per acre from a fully stocked stand of trees. The potential annual production of ponderosa pine on the Sanhedrin soil is 530 board feet per acre from a fully stocked stand of trees. Among the trees of limited extent are sugar pine, canyon live oak, Oregon white oak, and white fir.

The main limitations for the harvesting of timber are steepness of slope and the hazard of erosion. Cable yarding systems generally are used on this unit. Unsurfaced roads and skid trails are slippery when wet. They may be impassable during rainy periods. Rock for construction of roads is not readily available on this unit. Establishing plant cover on steep cut and fill slopes reduces erosion. Unless adequate plant cover or water bars are provided, steep yarding paths, skid trails, and firebreaks are subject to rilling and gullying. Harvesting systems that lift logs entirely off the ground reduce the disturbance of the protective layer of duff.

Plant competition is a concern in the production and reforestation of timber on this unit. When openings are made in the canopy, invading brushy plants that are not controlled can prevent the establishment of conifer seedlings. Reforestation can be accomplished by planting Douglas-fir, sugar pine, and ponderosa pine seedlings. If seed trees are present, natural reforestation of cutover areas by conifers frequently occurs.

Among the common forest understory plants are bedstraw, perennial fescue, brackenfern, and rose.

This map unit is in capability subclass VII_s (5), nonirrigated.

112—Benridge-Konocti association, 15 to 30 percent slopes. This map unit is on hills and mountains. The vegetation is mainly brush on south- and east-facing slopes and brush with scattered hardwoods and conifers on north- and west-facing slopes. Elevation is 1,300 to 4,300 feet. The average annual precipitation is 25 to 40 inches, the average annual air temperature is 53 to 59 degrees F, and the average frost-free period is 140 to 200 days.

This unit is about 40 percent Benridge loam, 20 percent Konocti cobbly loam, and 20 percent Konocti stony loam. The Konocti soils are on the upper part of side slopes, on ridgetops, and in ravines, and the Benridge soil is in the other areas of the unit.

Included in this unit are small areas of Konocti Variant soils and Rock outcrop and boulders 3 to 20 feet in diameter that are predominantly in areas of the Konocti

soils. Also included are small areas of Benridge and Konocti soils that have slopes of more than 30 percent or less than 15 percent; small areas of soils that are similar to the Benridge and Konocti soils but are cooler; soils that are similar to the Benridge soil but have a thinner surface layer because of erosion; and soils that have 35 to 55 percent rocks and stones throughout. Included areas make up about 20 percent of the total acreage. The percentage varies from one area to another.

The Benridge soil is very deep and well drained. It formed in material weathered from volcanic ash, breccia or tuff. Typically, the surface layer is light brown loam 6 inches thick. The upper 57 inches of the subsoil is yellowish red gravelly clay loam, and the lower 5 inches is yellowish red clay. Weathered volcanic breccia is at a depth of 68 inches.

Permeability of the Benridge soil is moderately slow. Available water capacity is 6.5 to 10.5 inches. Effective rooting depth is 60 inches or more. Surface runoff is rapid, and the hazard of erosion is severe.

The Konocti cobbly loam is moderately deep and well drained. It formed in material weathered from andesite, basalt, or dacite. Typically, the surface layer is brown cobbly loam 8 inches thick. The upper 8 inches of the subsoil is brown stony loam, and the lower 16 inches is light reddish brown very stony loam. The substratum to a depth of 39 inches is reddish yellow very stony loam. Slightly weathered dacite is at a depth of 39 inches.

Permeability of the Konocti cobbly loam is moderately slow. Available water capacity is 2 to 5 inches. Effective rooting depth is 20 to 40 inches. Surface runoff is rapid, and the hazard of erosion is severe.

The Konocti stony loam is moderately deep and well drained. It formed in material weathered from andesite, basalt, or dacite. Typically, the surface layer is brown stony loam 4 inches thick. The upper 5 inches of the subsoil is brown stony loam, and the lower 19 inches is light reddish brown very stony clay loam. Slightly weathered dacite is at a depth of 28 inches.

Permeability of the Konocti stony loam is moderately slow. Available water capacity is 2 to 5 inches. Effective rooting depth is 20 to 40 inches. Surface runoff is rapid, and the hazard of erosion is severe.

This unit is used mainly as wildlife habitat and watershed. It is also used for homesite development.

Woody shrubs are the most extensive plants on this unit. The characteristic vegetation is mainly manzanita, chamise, and California scrub oak with scattered areas of knobcone pine. Properly planned and applied prescribed burning or chemical or mechanical treatment can be used in small areas to improve habitat for wildlife, increase access, and reduce the risk of fire.

If this unit is used for homesite development, the main limitations are steepness of slope, the hazard of erosion, and the moderately slow permeability. Other limitations are the depth to bedrock in the Konocti soils and large

stones in the Konocti stony loam. Extensive cutting and filling generally are required. Cut and fill slopes are susceptible to erosion. The risk of erosion is increased by leaving the soil surface exposed during site development. Preserving the existing vegetation and revegetating disturbed areas around construction sites helps to control erosion. Cuts needed to provide building sites on the Konocti soils can expose bedrock and large stones. Large stones in the Konocti stony loam may interfere with building site preparation. Slope limits installation of septic tank absorption fields. Absorption lines should be installed on the contour. The limitations of moderately slow permeability of the Benridge and Konocti soils and the moderate depth of the Konocti soils can be minimized by increasing the area of the absorption fields or by using a specially designed sewage disposal system.

The Benridge soil is in capability unit IVE-1 (15), nonirrigated. The Konocti soils are in capability unit IVs-1 (15), nonirrigated.

113—Benridge-Konocti association, 30 to 50 percent slopes. This map unit is on hills and mountains. The vegetation is mainly brush on south- and east-facing slopes and brush with scattered hardwoods and conifers on north- and west-facing slopes. Elevation is 1,300 to 4,300 feet. The average annual precipitation is 25 to 40 inches, the average annual air temperature is 53 to 59 degrees F, and the average frost-free period is 140 to 200 days.

This unit is about 40 percent Benridge loam, 30 percent Konocti cobbly loam, and 15 percent Konocti stony loam. The Konocti soils are on the upper side slopes, on ridgetops, and in ravines, and the Benridge soil is in the other areas of the unit.

Included in this unit are small areas of Konocti Variant soils; Rock outcrop and stones 3 to 25 feet in diameter, mainly in areas of the Konocti soils; Benridge and Konocti soils that have slopes of more than 50 percent; and soils that are similar to the Benridge and Konocti soils but have soil temperatures lower than 59 degrees F. Also included are small areas of soils that are similar to the Konocti soils but have fewer rock fragments and small areas of soils that are similar to the Benridge soil but have 35 to 55 percent rock fragments throughout the profile. Included areas make up about 15 percent of the total acreage. The percentage varies from one area to another.

The Benridge soil is very deep and well drained. It formed in material weathered from volcanic ash, breccia or tuff. Typically, the surface layer is light brown loam 6 inches thick. The upper 57 inches of the subsoil is yellowish red gravelly clay loam, and the lower 5 inches is yellowish red clay. Weathered volcanic breccia is at a depth of 68 inches.

Permeability of the Benridge soil is moderately slow. Available water capacity is 6.5 to 10.5 inches. Effective

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rooting depth is 60 inches or more. Surface runoff is very rapid, and the hazard of erosion is severe.

The Konocti cobbly loam is moderately deep and well drained. It formed in material weathered from andesite, basalt, or dacite. Typically, the surface layer is brown cobbly loam 8 inches thick. The upper 8 inches of the subsoil is brown stony loam, and the lower 16 inches is light reddish brown very stony loam. The substratum to a depth of 39 inches is reddish yellow very stony loam. Slightly weathered dacite is at a depth of 39 inches.

Permeability of the Konocti cobbly loam is moderately slow. Available water capacity is 2 to 5 inches. Effective rooting depth is 20 to 40 inches. Surface runoff is rapid, and the hazard of erosion is severe.

The Konocti stony loam is moderately deep and well drained. It formed in material weathered from andesite, basalt, or dacite. Typically, the surface layer is brown stony loam 4 inches thick. The upper 5 inches of the subsoil is brown stony loam, and the lower 19 inches is light reddish brown very stony clay loam. Slightly weathered dacite is at a depth of 28 inches. In some areas the surface layer is very stony loam.

Permeability of the Konocti stony loam is moderately slow. Available water capacity is 2 to 5 inches. Effective rooting depth is 20 to 40 inches. Surface runoff is rapid, and the hazard of erosion is severe.

This unit is used mainly as wildlife habitat and watershed. It is also used for homesite development.

Woody shrubs are the most extensive plants on this unit. The characteristic vegetation is mainly manzanita, chamise, and California scrub oak with scattered areas of knobcone pine. Properly planned and applied prescribed burning or chemical or mechanical treatment can be used in small areas to improve habitat for wildlife, increase access, and reduce the risk of fire.

If this unit is used for homesite development, the main limitations are steepness of slope, the hazard of erosion, and the moderately slow permeability. Other limitations are depth to bedrock in the Konocti soils and large stones in the Konocti stony loam. Preferred building sites are limited to knolls and the less sloping areas.

Extensive cutting and filling generally are required to provide building sites. These cuts may expose bedrock and large stones on the Konocti soils. Large stones in the Konocti stony loam may interfere with building site preparation. Cut and fill slopes are susceptible to excessive erosion. The risk of erosion is increased by leaving the soil surface exposed during site development. Preserving the existing vegetation or revegetating disturbed areas around construction sites helps to control erosion. Slope is a major limitation for the installation of septic tank absorption fields.

Absorption lines should be installed on the contour. If this unit is used for septic tank absorption fields, the limitations of moderate depth of the Konocti soils and moderately slow permeability of the Konocti and Benridge soils can be minimized by increasing the size

of the absorption field or by using a specially designed sewage disposal system.

The Benridge soil is in capability subclass VIe (15), nonirrigated. The Konocti soils are in capability subclass VIi (15), nonirrigated.

114—Benridge-Sodabay loams, 8 to 15 percent slopes. This map unit is on hills. The vegetation is mainly brush with a few scattered oaks and conifers. Elevation is 1,350 to 1,450 feet. The average annual precipitation is 25 to 30 inches, the average annual air temperature is 56 to 59 degrees F, and the average frost-free period is 160 to 200 days.

This unit is about 45 percent Benridge loam and 40 percent Sodabay loam. The components of this unit are so intricately intermingled that it was not practical to map them separately at the scale used.

Included in this unit are small areas of Guenoc, Hambright, and Konocti soils. Also included are small areas of soils that are similar to the Benridge and Sodabay soils but are 40 to 60 inches deep to bedrock and Benridge and Sodabay soils that have slopes of 15 to 30 percent. Included areas make up about 15 percent of the total acreage. The percentage varies from one area to another.

The Benridge soil is very deep and well drained. It formed in material weathered from dacite, breccia, or tuff. Typically, the surface layer is light brown loam 6 inches thick. The upper 57 inches of the subsoil is yellowish red gravelly clay loam, and the lower 5 inches is yellowish red clay. Weathered breccia is at a depth of 68 inches.

Permeability of the Benridge soil is moderately slow. Available water capacity is 6.5 to 10.5 inches. Effective rooting depth is 60 inches or more. Surface runoff is medium, and the hazard of erosion is moderate.

The Sodabay soil is very deep and well drained. It formed in material weathered from dacite, tuff, breccia, or volcanic ash. Typically, the surface layer is light reddish brown loam 6 inches thick. The upper 46 inches of the subsoil is light reddish brown clay loam, and the lower 11 inches is light reddish brown gravelly clay loam. Weathered pyroclastic tuff is at a depth of 63 inches.

Permeability of the Sodabay soil is moderately slow. Available water capacity is 9.0 to 10.5 inches. Effective rooting depth is 60 inches or more. Surface runoff is medium, and the hazard of erosion is moderate.

This unit is used for homesite development, wildlife habitat, and watershed.

If this unit is used for homesite development, the main limitation is the moderately slow permeability of the soils. If this unit is used for septic tank absorption fields, the limitation of moderately slow permeability can be overcome by increasing the size of the absorption field or by using a specially designed sewage disposal system.

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The production of forage is limited by the restricted available water capacity. Where oaks and brush grow, forage production will be increased by managing harvesting of the trees and controlling brush. Vegetation in drainageways should be left for erosion control, wildlife habitat, and esthetic purposes. Volumes of 9 cords of wood per acre have been measured on this unit. This unit responds well to fertilizer, to rangeland seeding, and to proper grazing use. The main limitations for seeding are the presence of some stony areas and the tendency of the unit to produce woody plants. Among the common understory plants are soft chess, filaree, and annual clover.

If this unit is used for homesite development, the main limitations are the depth to bedrock, the very slow permeability, and the high shrink-swell potential of the subsoil. If the unit is used for septic tank absorption fields, the limitation of very slow permeability can be minimized by increasing the size of the absorption field or by using a specially designed sewage disposal system. The high shrink-swell potential of the subsoil should be considered when designing and constructing foundations, concrete structures, and paved areas. The effects of shrinking and swelling can be minimized by backfilling with a material that has low shrink-swell potential.

This map unit is in capability unit IVe-8 (15), nonirrigated.

117—Bottlerock-Glenview-Arrowhead complex, 5 to 30 percent slopes. This map unit is on volcanic hills. The vegetation is mainly brush with scattered conifers. Elevation is 1,500 to 3,000 feet. The average annual precipitation is 30 to 50 inches, the average annual air temperature is 53 to 59 degrees F, and the average frost-free period is 150 to 195 days.

This unit is about 50 percent Bottlerock extremely gravelly loam, 20 percent Glenview very gravelly loam, and 15 percent Arrowhead extremely gravelly sandy loam. The components of this unit are so intricately intermingled that it was not practical to map them separately at the scale used.

Included in this unit are small areas of soils that are similar to the Arrowhead soil but are 10 to 20 inches deep over obsidian and small areas of soils that are similar to the Glenview soil but have 35 to 70 percent cobbles and stones throughout. Included areas make up about 15 percent of the total acreage. The percentage varies from one area to another.

The Bottlerock soil is very deep and well drained. It formed in material weathered from obsidian. Typically, the upper 5 inches of the surface layer is dark grayish brown extremely gravelly loam and commonly has a surface pavement that is 90 percent gravel, the next 4 inches is light gray very gravelly loam, and the lower 10 inches is very pale brown very gravelly loam. The upper 9 inches of the subsoil is very pale brown very gravelly

sandy clay loam, the next 11 inches is light brown very gravelly clay loam, and the lower 24 inches is dark red, strong brown, and reddish yellow very gravelly clay.

Permeability of the Bottlerock soil is slow. Available water capacity is 2.5 to 6.0 inches. Effective rooting depth is 60 inches or more. Surface runoff is rapid, and the hazard of erosion is moderate.

The Glenview soil is very deep and well drained. It formed in material weathered from obsidian. Typically, the upper part of the surface layer is brown very gravelly loam 1 inch thick and the lower part is brown gravelly loam 5 inches thick. The upper 9 inches of the subsoil is reddish yellow gravelly clay loam, the next 25 inches is reddish yellow gravelly clay, and the lower 25 inches is reddish yellow gravelly clay loam. In some areas the surface layer is very gravelly sandy loam.

Permeability of the Glenview soil is moderately slow. Available water capacity is 6.5 to 9.5 inches. Effective rooting depth is 60 inches or more. Surface runoff is rapid, and the hazard of erosion is moderate.

The Arrowhead soil is moderately deep and well drained. It formed in material weathered from obsidian. Typically, the upper part of the surface layer is brown extremely gravelly sandy loam 1 inch thick and the lower part is brown gravelly sandy loam 3 inches thick. The upper 4 inches of the subsoil is brown gravelly sandy loam, the next 6 inches is light brown gravelly sandy clay loam, and the lower 17 inches is reddish yellow very stony clay. Hard, fractured obsidian is at a depth of 31 inches.

Permeability of the Arrowhead soil is moderately slow. Available water capacity is 1.5 to 3.5 inches. Effective rooting depth is 20 to 40 inches. Surface runoff is rapid, and the hazard of erosion is moderate.

This unit is used mainly as wildlife habitat and watershed. It can be used for production of timber and Christmas trees.

Proper site preparation on the Bottlerock and Glenview soils might make it possible to replace stands of brush and hardwoods with conifers. These soils are suited to the production of ponderosa pine. On the basis of a 100-year site curve, the mean site index for ponderosa pine is 103 on the Bottlerock soil and 110 on the Glenview soil. The potential annual production of ponderosa pine on the Bottlerock soil is 400 board feet per acre from a fully stocked stand of trees. The potential annual production of ponderosa pine on the Glenview soil is 460 board feet per acre from a fully stocked stand of trees. Estimates of the site index and yield for the Arrowhead soil have not been made because the vegetation is mostly brush.

A concern for the harvesting of timber is the potential shredding effect of the obsidian on rubber tires. The soils in this unit also are subject to gulying when the surface layer is removed. Disturbance of this protective layer can be reduced by the careful use of wheeled and tracked equipment. Establishing plant cover on steep cut

and fill slopes reduces erosion on the Glenview soil; however, revegetation of cut and fill slopes is difficult on the Bottlerock and Arrowhead soils because of the restricted available water capacity and the high content of rock fragments.

Seedling survival is a concern in the production of timber. Reforestation can be accomplished on the Bottlerock and Glenview soils by planting large ponderosa pine seedlings following proper site preparation. The droughtiness of the surface layer reduces the survival rate of seedlings, especially on south- and southwest-facing slopes. Reforestation should be carefully managed to reduce competition from undesirable plants and to provide partial shade for seedlings. Because of the high risk of fire on the surrounding brush-covered soils, firebreaks are needed to protect plantations on this unit. Planting on the Arrowhead soil is not practical because of the restricted available water capacity. Properly planned and applied prescribed burning or chemical or mechanical treatment can be used in small areas to improve habitat for wildlife, increase access, and reduce the risk of fire.

Among the common forest understory plants are blueblossom ceanothus, interior live oak, and manzanita.

This map unit is in capability unit IVs-1 (5), nonirrigated.

118—Bottlerock-Glenview-Arrowhead complex, 30 to 50 percent slopes. This map unit is on volcanic hills. The vegetation is mainly brush with scattered conifers. Elevation is 1,500 to 3,000 feet. The average annual precipitation is 30 to 50 inches, the average annual temperature is 53 to 59 degrees F, and the average frost-free period is 150 to 195 days.

This unit is about 40 percent Bottlerock extremely gravelly loam, 20 percent Glenview very gravelly loam, and 15 percent Arrowhead extremely gravelly sandy loam. The components of this unit are so intricately intermingled that it was not practical to map them separately at the scale used.

Included in this unit are small areas of soils that are similar to the Arrowhead soil but are 10 to 20 inches deep over obsidian and small areas of Arrowhead, Bottlerock, and Glenview soils that have slopes of more than 50 percent. Also included are small areas of soils that are similar to the Glenview soil but have 40 to 75 percent stones and cobbles throughout and small areas of soils that are similar to the Bottlerock, Glenview, and Arrowhead soils but are severely eroded. Included areas make up about 25 percent of the total acreage. The percentage varies from one area to another.

The Bottlerock soil is very deep and well drained and commonly has a surface pavement that is 90 percent gravel. It formed in material weathered from obsidian. Typically, the upper 5 inches of the surface layer is dark grayish brown extremely gravelly loam, the next 4 inches is light gray and very pale brown very gravelly loam, and

the lower 10 inches is very pale brown very gravelly loam 10 inches thick. The upper 9 inches of the subsoil is very pale brown very gravelly sandy clay loam, the next 11 inches is light brown very gravelly clay loam, and the lower 24 inches is strong brown and reddish yellow very gravelly clay.

Permeability of the Bottlerock soil is slow. Available water capacity is 2.5 to 6.0 inches. Effective rooting depth is 60 inches or more. Surface runoff is rapid, and the hazard of erosion is moderate.

The Glenview soil is very deep and well drained. It formed in material weathered from obsidian. Typically, the upper part of the surface layer is brown very gravelly loam 1 inch thick and the lower part is brown gravelly loam 5 inches thick. The upper 9 inches of the subsoil is reddish yellow clay loam, the next 25 inches is reddish yellow gravelly clay, and the lower 25 inches is reddish yellow gravelly clay loam. In some areas the surface layer is very gravelly sandy loam.

Permeability of the Glenview soil is moderately slow. Available water capacity is 6.5 to 9.5 inches. Effective rooting depth is 60 inches or more. Surface runoff is rapid, and the hazard of erosion is moderate.

The Arrowhead soil is moderately deep and well drained. It formed in material weathered from obsidian. Typically, the upper part of the surface layer is brown extremely gravelly sandy loam 1 inch thick and the lower part is brown gravelly sandy loam 3 inches thick. The upper 4 inches of the subsoil is brown gravelly sandy loam, the next 6 inches is light brown gravelly sandy clay loam, and the lower 17 inches is reddish yellow very stony clay. Hard, fractured obsidian is at a depth of 31 inches.

Permeability of the Arrowhead soil is moderately slow. Available water capacity is 1.5 to 3.5 inches. Effective rooting depth is 20 to 40 inches. Surface runoff is rapid and the hazard of erosion is severe.

This unit is used mainly as wildlife habitat and watershed. It can be used for production of timber and Christmas trees.

Proper site preparation on the Bottlerock and Glenview soils might make it possible to replace stands of brush and hardwoods with conifers. These soils are suited to the production of ponderosa pine. On the basis of a 100-year site curve, the mean site index for ponderosa pine is 103 on the Bottlerock soil and 110 on the Glenview soil. The potential annual production of ponderosa pine on the Bottlerock soil is 400 board feet per acre from a fully stocked stand of trees. The potential annual production of ponderosa pine on the Glenview soil is 460 board feet per acre from a fully stocked stand of trees. Estimates of the site index and yield for the Arrowhead soil have not been made because the vegetation is mostly brush.

Some concerns for the harvesting of timber are steepness of slope, the hazard of erosion, and the potential shredding effect of the obsidian on rubber tires.

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The soils in this unit have a tendency to gully when the surface layer is removed. Disturbance of this protective layer can be reduced by the careful use of wheeled and tracked equipment. Unless adequate plant cover or water bars are provided, steep yarding paths, skid trails, and firebreaks are subject to rilling and gulying. Rocks and loose soil material may slide down roadcuts on this unit. Establishing plant cover on steep cut and fill slopes reduces erosion on the Glenview soil; however, revegetation of cut and fill slopes is difficult on the Bottlerock and Arrowhead soils because of the restricted available water capacity and the high content of rock fragments.

Seedling survival is a concern in the production of timber. Reforestation can be accomplished on the Bottlerock and Glenview soils by planting large ponderosa pine seedlings following proper site preparation. The droughtiness of the surface layer reduces the survival rate of seedlings, especially on south- and southwest-facing slopes. Reforestation should be carefully managed to reduce competition from undesirable plants and to provide partial shade for seedlings. Because of the high risk of fire on the surrounding brush-covered soils, firebreaks are needed to protect plantations on this unit. Planting on the Arrowhead soil is not practical because of the restricted available water capacity. Properly planned and applied prescribed burning or chemical or mechanical treatment can be used in small areas to improve habitat for wildlife, increase access, and reduce the risk of fire.

Among the common forest understory plants are blueblossom ceanothus, interior live oak, and manzanita.

This map unit is in capability subclass VI (5), nonirrigated.

119—Bressa-Millsholm loams, 8 to 15 percent slopes. This map unit is on hills. The vegetation is mainly annual grasses and oaks. Elevation is 1,200 to 2,500 feet. The average annual precipitation is 30 to 40 inches, the average annual air temperature is 56 to 59 degrees F, and the average frost-free period is 160 to 200 days.

This unit is about 50 percent Bressa loam and 30 percent Millsholm loam. The components of this unit are so intricately intermingled that it was not practical to map them separately at the scale used.

Included in this unit are small areas of Rock outcrop and small areas with stones on the surface. Also included are small areas of Bressa and Millsholm soils that have slopes of less than 8 percent, soils that are similar to the Bressa and Millsholm soils but receive more than 40 inches of precipitation annually, and soils that are similar to the Millsholm soil but are less than 10 inches deep to bedrock. Included areas make up about 20 percent of the total acreage. The percentage varies from one area to another.

The Bressa soil is moderately deep and well drained. It formed in material weathered from sandstone. Typically, the surface layer is light brownish gray and pale brown loam 12 inches thick. The subsoil is light yellowish brown clay loam 14 inches thick. Fractured sandstone is at a depth of 26 inches.

Permeability of the Bressa soil is moderately slow. Available water capacity is 3.0 to 7.5 inches. Effective rooting depth is 20 to 40 inches. Surface runoff is medium, and the hazard of erosion is moderate.

The Millsholm soil is shallow and well drained. It formed in material weathered from sandstone or shale. Typically, the surface layer is brown loam 3 inches thick. The subsoil is pale brown clay loam 8 inches thick. Fractured sandstone is at a depth of 11 inches.

Permeability of the Millsholm soil is moderate. Available water capacity is 1.5 to 3.5 inches. Effective rooting depth is 10 to 20 inches. Surface runoff is medium, and the hazard of erosion is moderate.

This unit is used mainly for livestock grazing, wildlife habitat, and watershed. It is also used for homesite development and firewood production.

The production of forage is limited by a dense canopy cover in some areas and the restricted available water capacity and shallow depth of the Millsholm soil. Where oaks are present, forage production can be increased by managed harvesting of the trees. Vegetation in drainageways should be left for erosion control, wildlife habitat, and esthetic purposes. Volumes from 13 to 36 cords of wood per acre have been measured on the Bressa soil. The Bressa soil responds well to fertilization, rangeland seeding, and proper grazing use. The main limitation for seeding is the woody canopy cover. Among the common understory plants on this unit are wild oat, soft chess, and filaree.

If this unit is used for homesite development, the main limitation is depth to bedrock. Another limitation is the moderately slow permeability of the Bressa soil. Cuts needed to provide building sites can expose bedrock. Shallow depth to bedrock in the Millsholm soil is a major limitation for septic tank absorption fields. If the Bressa soil is used for septic tank absorption fields, the limitations of depth to bedrock and moderately slow permeability can be minimized by increasing the size of the absorption field or by using a specially designed sewage disposal system.

This map unit is in capability subclass VIe (15), nonirrigated.

120—Bressa-Millsholm loams, 15 to 30 percent slopes. This map unit is on hills. The vegetation is mainly annual grasses and oaks. Elevation is 1,200 to 2,500 feet. The average annual precipitation is 30 to 40 inches, the average annual air temperature is 56 to 59 degrees F, and the average frost-free period is 160 to 200 days.

Excerpt from:
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**Snider Vineyards
Supplemental Comments To ATF Notice No. 961**

ATTACHMENT 4

SOILS

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5/6 or 7.5YR 4/6. Chroma is more than 4 in at least the lower part of the B2t horizon. The horizon is very gravelly loam or very gravelly clay loam and commonly is 22 to 35 percent clay. The clay content continues to increase in the lower part of the B2t horizon and increases or decreases only slightly in the B3t horizon. The horizon is slightly acid to strongly acid.

Benridge Series

The Benridge series consists of very deep, well drained soils on hills and mountains. These soils formed in material weathered from volcanic ash, breccia, or tuff. Slope is 8 to 75 percent.

Soils of the Benridge series are fine, mixed, thermic Mollic Palexeralfs.

Typical pedon of a Benridge loam in an area of Benridge-Konocti association, 30 to 50 percent slopes, about 20 feet east of Konocti Road, at a point about 600 feet north of the first hairpin turn going up the hill; about 2,600 feet south and 2,000 feet east of the northwest corner of sec. 13, T. 13 N., R. 9 W., Kelseyville quadrangle.

A1—0 to 6 inches; light brown (7.5YR 6/4) loam, dark reddish brown (5YR 3/4) moist; strong medium subangular blocky structure parting to moderate fine granular; slightly hard, friable, slightly sticky and slightly plastic; many very fine, fine, and medium roots; common fine and medium interstitial pores and few medium and coarse tubular pores; 12 percent pebbles 2 to 25 millimeters in diameter; mildly alkaline; abrupt wavy boundary.

B21t—6 to 21 inches; yellowish red (5YR 4/6) gravelly clay loam, dark reddish brown (5YR 3/4) moist; strong medium and coarse subangular blocky structure; hard, friable, sticky and plastic; weakly smeary; few very fine and fine roots; common very fine interstitial pores and common fine and coarse tubular pores; many moderately thick clay films on peds and in pores; 17 percent pebbles 2 to 50 millimeters in diameter; neutral; clear wavy boundary.

B22t—21 to 50 inches; yellowish red (5YR 4/6) gravelly clay loam, dark reddish brown (5YR 3/4) moist; moderate fine and medium subangular blocky structure; hard, friable, sticky and plastic; weakly smeary; few very fine roots; common very fine and fine interstitial pores and common medium and few coarse tubular pores; many moderately thick clay films on peds and in pores; 25 percent pebbles 2 to 75 millimeters in diameter and 2 percent cobbles 75 to 100 millimeters in diameter; neutral; gradual smooth boundary.

B23t—50 to 63 inches; yellowish red (5YR 5/6) gravelly clay loam, red (2.5YR 4/6) moist; moderate fine and medium subangular blocky structure; hard, friable, sticky and plastic; weakly smeary; few very fine and

fine roots; common very fine and fine interstitial and tubular pores; 20 percent pebbles 2 to 50 millimeters in diameter; many thick clay films on peds and in pores; neutral; gradual smooth boundary.

B24t—63 to 68 inches; yellowish red (5YR 5/6) clay, reddish brown (5YR 4/4) moist; strong fine and medium subangular blocky structure; very hard, firm, sticky and plastic; weakly smeary; few very fine interstitial and tubular pores; 8 percent pebbles 2 to 50 millimeters in diameter; many thick clay films on peds and in pores; neutral.

R—68 inches; volcanic breccia.

Thickness of the solum and depth of the profile are 60 to 80 inches. The mean annual soil temperature is 59 to 62 degrees F. The part of the profile between depths of 6 and 19 inches is dry in all parts from June 1 to October 15 and is moist in all parts from December 1 to March 30. Mineralogy is influenced by the presence of amorphous material.

The A horizon has color of 7.5YR 6/2 or 6/4 or of 10YR 6/3 or 6/4. Moist color is 5YR, 7.5YR, or 10YR 3/4. The horizon is neutral or mildly alkaline. Clay content is 15 to 25 percent.

The B2t horizon has color of 5YR 4/6, 5/6, 6/4, or 6/6. Moist color is 2.5YR 4/6 or 5YR 3/4, 4/4, or 4/6. Chroma is more than 4 in at least the lower part of the horizon. It is clay, gravelly clay, clay loam, or gravelly clay loam. The particle-size control section is 35 to 50 percent clay and 5 to 30 percent rock fragments. Clay content continues to increase with increasing depth to more than 60 inches.

Benridge Variant

The Benridge Variant consists of moderately deep, well drained soils on hillslopes at valley sides. These soils formed in material weathered from basaltic tuff. Slope is 2 to 15 percent.

Soils of the Benridge Variant are fine, mixed, thermic Mollic Palexeralfs.

Typical pedon of Benridge Variant loam, 2 to 15 percent slopes, 1,600 feet southwest of Butts Canyon Road, at a point 0.4 mile northwest of its intersection with Oat Hill Road; Lat. 38°43'22" N. and Long. 122°33'6" W. (in an unsectionalized area), Detert Reservoir quadrangle.

A1—0 to 6 inches; reddish brown (5YR 5/4) loam, dark reddish brown (5YR 3/4) moist; moderate medium and coarse subangular blocky structure; slightly hard, friable, slightly sticky and slightly plastic; common very fine and fine roots; common very fine and fine tubular and interstitial pores; 8 percent pebbles 2 to 75 millimeters in diameter; neutral; clear smooth boundary.

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- A3—6 to 11 inches; light reddish brown (5YR 6/4) loam, reddish brown (5YR 4/4) moist; moderate fine and medium subangular blocky structure; hard, friable, sticky and slightly plastic; common very fine, fine, and medium roots; common very fine and fine tubular pores and common very fine interstitial pores; 8 percent pebbles 2 to 75 millimeters in diameter; slightly acid; abrupt wavy boundary.
- ||B2t—11 to 24 inches; pale yellow (2.5Y 7/4) gravelly clay, light yellowish brown (2.5Y 6/4) moist; common fine and medium subangular blocky structure; very hard, firm, very sticky and very plastic; common very fine, fine, medium, and coarse roots; few very fine tubular pores; many thick clay films on peds and in pores; 20 percent pebbles 2 to 75 millimeters in diameter and 10 percent cobbles 75 to 250 millimeters in diameter; slightly acid; abrupt irregular boundary.
- ||Cr—24 to 50 inches; weathered tuff with rounded cobbles and stones of basalt imbedded within; few fine and medium roots in fractures; many moderately thick and thick clay films in fractures.

Thickness of the solum and depth to the paralithic contact are 20 to 40 inches. The mean annual soil temperature is 60 to 63 degrees F. The part of the profile between depths of 6 and 24 inches is dry in all parts from July 1 to October 15 and is moist in all parts from December 1 to April 30. The profile is slightly acid to neutral throughout. Pebbles and cobbles make up 5 to 35 percent of the profile.

The A1 horizon has color of 5YR 5/3 or 5/4 or of 7.5YR 5/4. Moist color is 5YR 3/3, 3/4, 4/3, or 4/4 or 7.5YR 4/4. Moist values of 3 extend to a depth of 4 to 6 inches. Some pedons do not have an A3 horizon.

The B2t horizon has color of 10YR or 2.5Y 6/4 or 7/4. Moist color is 10YR or 2.5YR 5/4 or 6/4. The horizon is gravelly clay or gravelly clay loam that is 35 to 55 percent clay.

Bottlerock Series

The Bottlerock series consists of very deep, well drained soils on volcanic hills. These soils formed in material weathered from obsidian. Slope is 2 to 50 percent.

Soils of the Bottlerock series are loamy-skeletal, mixed, mesic Ultic Palexeralfs.

Typical pedon of a Bottlerock extremely gravelly loam in an area of Bottlerock-Glenview-Arrowhead complex, 5 to 30 percent slopes, 10 feet west of access road, 550 feet west of Bottlerock Road, at a point about 3 miles south of its intersection with Cold Creek Road; 750 feet south and 250 feet east of the northwest corner of sec. 7, T. 12 N., R. 8 W., Kelseyville quadrangle.

2/2) moist; weak very fine granular structure; soft, very friable, slightly sticky and nonplastic; weakly smeary; few very fine and fine roots; many medium and coarse interstitial pores; 90 percent obsidian pebbles 2 to 50 millimeters in diameter occurring as a gravel pavement; medium acid; abrupt smooth boundary.

A12—1 to 5 inches; dark grayish brown (10YR 4/2) extremely gravelly loam, very dark brown (10YR 2/2) moist; weak very fine granular structure; soft, very friable, slightly sticky and nonplastic; weakly smeary; common very fine and fine roots and few medium roots; few very fine, fine, medium, and coarse interstitial pores; 80 percent pebbles 2 to 50 millimeters in diameter; medium acid; abrupt smooth boundary.

A13—5 to 9 inches; light gray (10YR 7/2) very gravelly loam, brown (10YR 4/3) moist; weak fine subangular blocky structure parting to common fine and medium granular; soft, very friable, slightly sticky and nonplastic; weakly smeary; many very fine and fine roots and common medium roots; many very fine and common fine interstitial pores and common fine and few medium tubular pores; 20 percent shot 2 to 5 millimeters in diameter and 25 percent pebbles 2 to 25 millimeters in diameter; slightly acid; abrupt wavy boundary.

A3—9 to 19 inches; very pale brown (10YR 7/3) very gravelly loam, yellowish brown (10YR 4/3) moist; moderate fine subangular blocky structure parting to moderate fine and medium granular; slightly hard, friable, slightly sticky and nonplastic; weakly smeary; common fine and medium roots and few coarse and very coarse roots; many very fine and fine interstitial pores and common fine and medium tubular pores; 20 percent shot 2 to 5 millimeters in diameter and 25 percent pebbles 2 to 25 millimeters in diameter; slightly acid; clear wavy boundary.

B1t—19 to 28 inches; very pale brown (10YR 7/3) very gravelly sandy clay loam, yellowish brown (10YR 5/4) moist; weak fine, medium, and coarse subangular blocky structure; slightly hard, friable, slightly sticky and slightly plastic; weakly smeary; few fine, medium, and coarse roots; many very fine and fine interstitial pores and common fine and medium tubular pores; few thin clay films on peds; 20 percent shot 2 to 8 millimeters in diameter and 20 percent pebbles 2 to 25 millimeters in diameter; medium acid; gradual wavy boundary.

B21t—28 to 39 inches; light brown (7.5YR 6/4) very gravelly clay loam, strong brown (7.5YR 4/6) moist; moderate medium and coarse angular blocky structure; slightly hard, friable, slightly sticky and slightly plastic; weakly smeary; few very fine and fine roots; many very fine interstitial pores and common

Excerpt from:
Soil Survey of Lake County
May, 1989

Lake County, California

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Highway 53 at Lower Lake; 410 feet north and 100 feet west of the southeast corner of sec. 10, T. 12 N., R. 7 W., Lower Lake quadrangle.

A11—0 to 6 inches; pale brown (10YR 6/3) loam, dark brown (10YR 3/3) moist; moderate fine and medium subangular blocky structure; hard, friable, slightly sticky and slightly plastic; common very fine and fine roots; common very fine and fine interstitial pores and few very fine and fine tubular pores; slightly acid; gradual wavy boundary.

A12—6 to 10 inches; pale brown (10YR 6/3) loam, dark brown (10YR 3/3) moist; moderate fine and medium angular blocky structure; hard, friable, slightly sticky and slightly plastic; few very fine and common fine roots; common very fine and fine interstitial pores and few very fine and fine tubular pores; few thin silt coatings on peds and in pores; 2 percent pebbles 2 to 5 millimeters in diameter; slightly acid; gradual wavy boundary.

B1t—10 to 35 inches; grayish brown (2.5YR 5/2) clay loam, dark brown (10YR 4/3) moist; moderate medium and coarse angular blocky structure; hard, firm, sticky and plastic; few fine roots; common very fine and fine interstitial pores and few very fine and fine tubular pores; few thin clay films on peds and in pores; slightly acid; clear wavy boundary.

B21t—35 to 39 inches; light brownish gray (2.5YR 6/2) clay loam, variegated dark brown (10YR 4/3) and yellowish brown (10YR 5/3) moist; strong fine and medium angular blocky structure; hard, firm, sticky and plastic; few fine roots; common fine interstitial pores and few fine tubular pores; common thick clay films on peds and in pores; 5 percent pebbles 2 to 20 millimeters in diameter; neutral; clear wavy boundary.

B22t—39 to 42 inches; variegated light brownish gray (10YR 6/2) and yellowish brown (10YR 5/6) clay loam, dark yellowish brown (10YR 4/4) moist; common large distinct brown (10YR 5/3) mottles; moderate fine and medium angular blocky structure; very hard, very firm, sticky and plastic; few fine roots; common very fine interstitial pores and few fine tubular pores; common thick clay films on peds and in pores; 2 percent pebbles 2 to 15 millimeters in diameter; slightly acid; clear wavy boundary.

B23t—42 to 59 inches; variegated pale brown (10YR 6/3) and yellowish brown (10YR 5/6) clay, dark yellowish brown (10YR 4/4) moist; common fine distinct strong brown (7.5YR 5/8) mottles; moderate fine and medium angular blocky structure; very hard, very firm, very sticky and very plastic; few fine roots; few very fine interstitial and tubular pores; common thick clay films on peds and in pores; 2 percent

B24t—59 to 71 inches; brown (10YR 5/3) clay, dark yellowish brown (10YR 4/4) moist; moderate medium prismatic structure parting to moderate medium and fine angular blocky; very hard, very firm, very sticky and very plastic; few fine roots; few very fine interstitial and tubular pores; many thick clay films on peds and in pores; slightly acid.

Thickness of the solum and depth of the profile are 60 to 80 inches. The mean annual soil temperature is 59 to 63 degrees F. The part of the profile between depths of 6 and 13 inches is dry in all parts from July 1 to September 30 and is moist in all parts from December 1 to April 15. A seasonal high water table is at a depth of 40 to 72 inches in winter. The water table drops below a depth of 72 inches during the growing season. Mottles are at a depth of 36 to 60 inches. The solum has 0 to 10 percent pebbles.

The A horizon has color of 10YR 5/2, 6/2, or 6/3 or of 2.5Y 5/2 or 6/2. Moist color is 10YR 3/2, 3/3, or 4/3. The upper 4 to 10 inches of the horizon has moist value of 3. Organic matter content is 0.25 to 1.0 percent below a depth of 8 inches. The horizon is slightly acid or neutral.

The B2t horizon has color of 10YR 4/3, 5/2, 5/3, 5/6, 6/2, or 6/3 or of 2.5YR 5/2 or 6/2. Moist color is 10YR 3/4, 4/3, 4/4, or 5/3. Mottles are 10YR or 7.5YR 5/3, 5/6, or 5/8. The horizon is clay loam, silty clay, or clay and has 35 to 50 percent clay. It is medium acid to neutral.

* Konocti Series

The Konocti series consists of moderately deep, well drained soils on hills and mountains. These soils formed in material weathered from andesite, basalt, or dacite. Slope is 2 to 75 percent.

Soils of the Konocti series are loamy-skeletal, mixed, thermic Ultic Haploxeralfs.

Typical pedon of a Konocti cobbly loam (fig. 6) in an area of Benridge-Konocti association, 30 to 50 percent slopes, about 2 miles east of Kelseyville on Konocti Road, 1,300 feet up the road from benchmark 2493; 2,300 feet east and 1,150 feet south of the northwest corner of sec. 19, T. 13 N., R. 8 W., Kelseyville quadrangle.

A1—0 to 4 inches; brown (10YR 4/3) cobbly loam, dark brown (7.5YR 3/2) moist; strong very fine, fine, medium, and coarse granular structure; slightly hard, very friable, nonsticky and slightly plastic; many fine roots; many very fine and fine interstitial pores; 10 percent pebbles and 20 percent cobbles; neutral; clear wavy boundary.

B1—4 to 8 inches; brown (10YR 5/3) cobbly loam, dark

Excerpt from:
Soil Survey of Lake County
May, 1989

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Lake County, California

is cobbles, 0 to 10 percent is stones, and 15 to 25 percent is pebbles.

The B2t horizon has color of 5YR 6/3 or 6/4 or of 7.5YR 5/4 or 6/4. Moist color is 5YR 3/4, 4/3, 4/4, or 5/4 or 7.5YR 3/4 or 4/4. The horizon is stony loam, very stony loam, stony clay loam, or very stony clay loam that is 22 to 35 percent clay. Rock fragment content ranges from 20 to 60 percent, of which 5 to 20 percent is pebbles, 5 to 20 percent is cobbles, and 10 to 30 percent is stones. Rock fragment content averages 35 to 55 percent in the upper 20 inches. Base saturation (sum of cations) is 60 to 80 percent and is less than 75 percent in at least some part of the profile.

Konocti Variant

The Konocti Variant consists of deep, well drained soils on volcanic hills. These soils formed in material weathered from basalt. Slope is 2 to 30 percent.

Soils of the Konocti Variant are loamy-skeletal, mixed, thermic Ultic Haploxeralfs.

Typical pedon of a Konocti Variant in an area of Konocti Variant-Konocti-Hambright complex, 2 to 15 percent slopes, about 200 feet east of Long Valley Road, at a point 4.5 miles from its intersection with State Highway 20; 300 feet north and 2,300 feet east of the southwest corner of sec. 24, T. 14 N., R. 7 W., Clearlake Oaks Southeast quadrangle.

O2—0.5 inch to 0; partially decomposed layer of oak and manzanita leaves and twigs.

A1—0 to 4 inches; yellowish brown (10YR 5/4) gravelly loam, dark yellowish brown (10YR 3/4) moist; moderate fine and medium subangular blocky structure; slightly hard, friable, slightly sticky and slightly plastic; many very fine and fine roots and common medium roots; many very fine and fine interstitial pores; 25 percent pebbles and 5 percent cobbles; neutral; clear wavy boundary.

B1t—4 to 11 inches; brown (7.5YR 5/4) very gravelly loam, dark brown (7.5YR 3/4) moist; moderate fine and medium subangular blocky structure; slightly hard, friable, slightly sticky and slightly plastic; many fine and medium roots and common very fine and coarse roots; many very fine and fine interstitial pores; few thin clay films on peds and in pores; 25 percent pebbles and 10 percent cobbles; neutral; gradual wavy boundary.

B21t—11 to 22 inches; strong brown (7.5YR 5/6) very gravelly clay loam, strong brown (7.5YR 4/6) moist; moderate medium and coarse subangular blocky structure; hard, firm, sticky and plastic; many fine, medium, and coarse roots; common very fine, fine, and medium interstitial pores; common thin clay films on peds and in pores; 25 percent pebbles and

moderate medium and coarse subangular blocky structure; hard, firm, sticky and plastic; many fine and medium roots and common coarse roots; many fine and medium interstitial pores; common moderately thick clay films on peds and in pores; 20 percent pebbles, 20 percent cobbles, and 5 percent stones; slightly acid; clear wavy boundary.

B3t—39 to 53 inches; light brown (7.5YR 6/4) very stony clay loam, brown (7.5YR 4/4) moist; weak fine and medium subangular blocky structure; slightly hard, firm, sticky and plastic; common fine, medium, and coarse roots; common fine and medium interstitial pores; common thin clay films on peds and in pores; 20 percent pebbles, 20 percent cobbles, and 5 percent stones; slightly acid; gradual wavy boundary.

R—53 inches; rounded and fractured cobbles, stones, and boulders of olivine basalt with some soil material and roots in voids and fractures.

Thickness of the solum and depth to a lithic contact are 40 to 60 inches. Mean annual soil temperature is 59 to 62 degrees F. The part of the profile between depths of 8 and 20 inches is dry in all parts from June 15 to October 15 and is moist in all parts from January 1 to April 15. Reaction is neutral or slightly acid throughout the profile.

The A horizon has color of 10YR 5/3 or 5/4 or of 7.5YR 5/2 or 5/4. Moist color is 10YR 3/3 or 3/4 or 7.5YR 3/2 or 3/4. The horizon is 4 to 10 inches thick. It is gravelly loam or cobbly loam that is 18 to 25 percent clay.

The B2t horizon has hue of 7.5YR or 5YR 5/4, 5/6 or 6/4. Moist color is 7.5YR or 5YR 3/4, 4/4, or 4/6. The horizon is very gravelly clay loam, very cobbly clay loam, or very stony clay loam that is 27 to 35 percent clay. Rock fragment content ranges from 35 to 55 percent and consists of varying percentages of pebbles, cobbles, stones, and boulders. Base saturation (sum of cations) is 40 to 75 percent.

Landlow Variant

The Landlow Variant consists of very deep, poorly drained soils in basins and on flood plains. These soils are derived from recent lacustrine deposits. Slope is 0 to 2 percent.

Soils of the Landlow Variant are fine, montmorillonitic, thermic Aquic Haploxerolls.

Typical pedon of Landlow Variant silty clay loam, 1,600 feet north of the north end of Blower Road, 500 feet south and 1,300 feet west of the northeast corner of sec. 33, T. 14 N., R. 9 W., Luzerne quadrangle.

A1—0 to 7 inches; grayish brown (2.5Y 5/2) silty clay loam, light brown (10YR 3/4) moist; common fine distinct

Snider Vineyards
Supplemental Comments To ATF Notice No. 961

ATTACHMENT 5

Photos of the Fortress Vineyard

#1



Photo No. 1: Taken from the Fortress Vineyard at the 2300 foot elevation (on Benson Ridge) showing the vineyard in the foreground and the close proximity to the Lake with the land-lake breeze effect characteristic of the proposed Red Hills AVA.

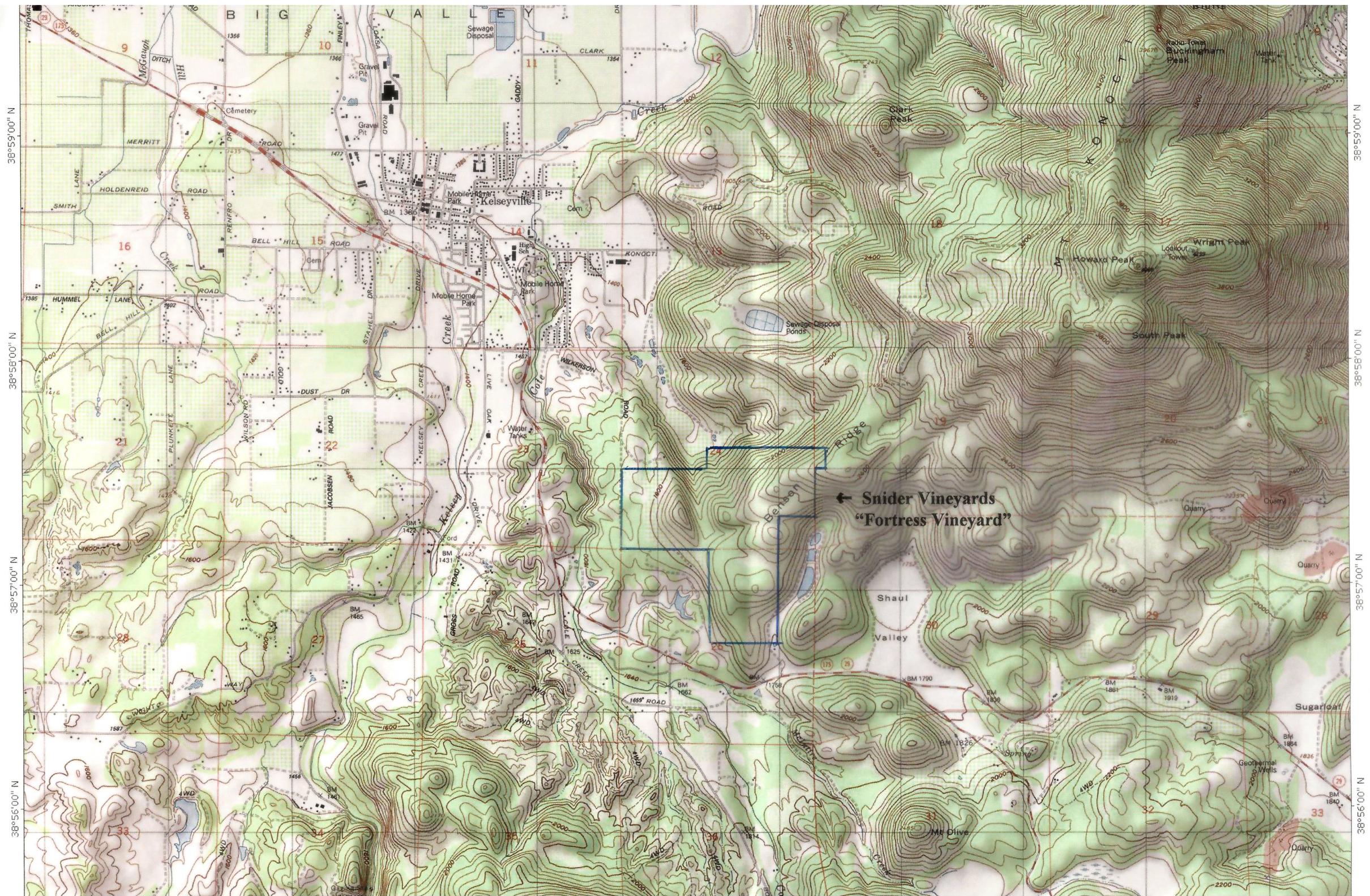
Photos Nos. 2-5: Clearing various blocks for the "Fortress Vineyard" showing characteristic red soil.

#2



#4





← Snider Vineyards
"Fortress Vineyard"

Notice #961,
Comment # 3

TEL: 800-400-1353
FAX: 541-271-1609
www.csa-compliance.com



POST OFFICE BOX 48
GARDINER, OR 97441
csa@csa-compliance.com

December 23, 2002

Chief, Regulations Division
Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms
P. O. Box 50221
Washington, DC 20091-0221

5 pages by fax 202-927-8525

Ms. Nancy Sutton
Regulatory Specialist
Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms
221 Main Street, 11th Floor
San Francisco, CA 94105

5 pages by fax 707-773-1415

Re: Comment and Amendment of Petition
Notice 961, Red Hills (California) Viticultural Area

ATF has proposed to establish the pending Red Hills viticultural area (NPRM 961) under the modified name "Red Hills (California)." The petitioners object to the use of California as a modifier, and hereby amend our petition to propose the alternative name "Red Hills District" for our new appellation.

Evidence for the name "Red Hills District"

There is ample evidence that the name "Red Hills District" is an appropriate choice for the petitioned area. In fact, because of the amount of evidence in favor of that name, the AVA petition was originally drafted to propose the appellation as "Red Hills District," but later revised before submission in favor of the shorter version of the name ("Red Hills").

The area has been informally referred to simply as "Red Hills" by local residents for many years, but we found very little written documentation of the use of that name (except for maps showing "Red Hills Road"). As described in the petition, we found three mentions of "Red Hills" in the county's historical archives. The majority of our documented evidence of that name came from the Lake County General Plan (Cobb Mountain Area Plan) published in 1989, in which Red Hills is

mentioned numerous times. In that document, the County consistently used the specific name "Red Hills District" every time reference was made to the area. These references are quoted in the petition we submitted on pages 25 and 26.

Moreover, the county planners used the word "District" *only* in connection with Red Hills, and *not* with any of the other specific County areas mentioned in the Cobb Mountain Area Plan. Cobb Valley, Loch Lomond, Hobergs, Adam Springs, Lake Forest, Pine Summit, Wildcat Road, and Salminas, other place names found within the Cobb Mountain Planning Area, are all identified in the document as "areas" (i.e., "the Salminas area," etc.), not "districts."

The County planners are not the only writers who have referred to the proposed appellation by the name "Red Hills District." A recent article in an international edition of Forbes magazine referred to the proposed appellation as the Red Hills District. A copy of the article is enclosed for your reference.

Objections to California as a modifier

We have two objections to the use of California in our appellation name. First and foremost, we feel it is misleading to consumers. The state of California is very large and contains a wide variety of winegrape growing conditions. We have invested substantial effort and expense to establish a small, premium vineyard area as an AVA, and we will invest much more in the future to familiarize consumers with the new appellation. To prominently associate the area with the name California dilutes the area's identity and devalues our efforts. We feel the modifier "Oregon" added to the pending Red Hill AVA is not as troubling in this regard, because Oregon is a much smaller state and contains less varied conditions. (California has 570,000 acres of winegrapes planted, whereas Oregon has only 11,100 acres.)

Second, we feel the addition of the name California is unnecessary in order to distinguish our appellation from the appellation which is pending in Oregon. A person who is sophisticated enough to buy a wine because of its appellation is likely to read the rest of the label and notice the bottling location, which is suggestive of the origin of the grapes. It is rare for Oregon wineries to buy California grapes, or for California wineries to crush Oregon fruit.

Also, as can be seen from the Proposed Rules of the two AVAs, the grape varieties grown in the proposed Red Hill AVA in Oregon tend to be different than the grape varieties grown in the proposed Red Hills AVA in California. The Red Hill AVA in Oregon is suitable to grow shorter season grapes, and grows predominantly Pinot Noir, followed by Chardonnay, and only a token amount of Cabernet Sauvignon. The Red Hills appellation in California is suitable for longer

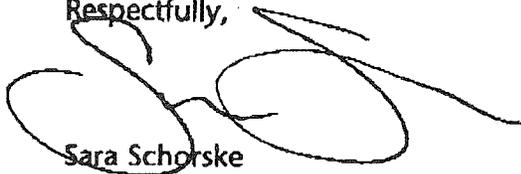
Chief, ATF Regulations Division
December 23, 2002
page 3

season red grapes, primarily Cabernet Sauvignon, as well as some Sauvignon Blanc.

If ATF feels strongly that a geographic modifier is necessary, we would prefer the use of North Coast, a well-known California appellation whose growing conditions are more consistent with those in Red Hills District. Red Hills District is contained entirely within the North Coast AVA.

Thank you for your consideration of this petition amendment.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sara Schorske", written over a circular stamp or mark.

Also signed by the following (see attached page):

William Beckstoffer (Beckstoffer Vineyards)
George Buonaccorsi (Beringer Blass Wine Estates)
Ronald Bartolucci (Bartoluccit Vineyards)
Robert Roumiguere, Jr. (Roumiguere Vineyards)
John A. Adriance (Snows Lake Vineyard)
Rick Gunier (Lake County Winegrape Commission)
Pete Downs (Kendall-Jackson Winery and Vineyards)

I support the comments and amendments of Petition Notice 961.

Signed:

[Signature]
Original Petition Filing Committee Member

Date: 12/10/02

I support the comments and amendments of Petition Notice 961.

Signed:

[Signature]
Original Petition Filing Committee Member

Date: December 16 2002

I support the comments and amendments of Petition Notice 961.

Signed:

[Signature]
Original Petition Filing Committee Member

Date: 12-11-02

I support the comments and amendments of Petition Notice 961.

Signed:

[Signature]
Original Petition Filing Committee Member

Date: 12-10-02

I support the comments and amendments of Petition Notice 961.

Signed:

[Signature]
Original Petition Filing Committee Member
Chief Operating Officer
Snows Lake Vineyard

Date: 12/10/02

[Signature]
12/10/02

[Signature]
OK
12/10/02

Napa Valley has made the grape grower Andy Beckstoffer rich. Now he's betting his name—and fortune—on new soil.

A tough year in a hardscrabble market may be just the time to expand. Which is why William Andrew (Andy) Beckstoffer, the grand old man of the grape growers in Napa Valley, California, is spending \$25 million—and not on familiar soil. "We're Napa people, but the quality here is just so much better," says Beckstoffer, striding over his red-dirt and obsidian hillside in nearby Lake County. He hopes that his 400-hectare spread—50 kilometers and several income levels from the Napa border—will be the center of a new wine appellation, like Carneros in Napa or Margaux in France.

The expansion comes at a time of softening grape prices and a market worried about consumer demand. Beckstoffer, 62, calls it "the riskiest thing I've ever done." If it works, it could spark a boom in a region of pear orchards and bulk grapes—where the land goes for a twentieth the price of a Napa parcel just to the south. It will also lift the fortunes of Beckstoffer Family Vineyards, his holding company (2001 sales: \$26 million). Now Lake is "an economic ghetto," the grower says. "It will be wine country; fashionable."

Hard to believe, in a county with 4 wineries to Napa's 250 and with none of Napa's exclusive restaurants. But Beckstoffer figures that even if the market collapses, he can still supply the fruit for \$12 bottles—up to 500,000 cases a year by 2008, when his vines are fully producing—and still make a profit.

Beckstoffer came to Napa in 1969, a dicey time, with an M.B.A. from Dartmouth College's Tuck school. He worked in vineyard management for Heublein—he persuaded the company to get into winemaking—at the start of the region's explosion and the height of the grape boycotts. He has an empty Inglenook bottle signed by the labor leader Cesar Chavez; they drank the wine the night they settled years of labor disputes.

His first independent venture, in 1973, nearly buried him. Taking out an adjustable \$8 million loan that started at 7%, Beckstoffer got nailed by stagflation: Cabernet prices fell to \$400 a ton from \$800 in one year, and interest rates jumped (they peaked at 15%). Heublein, which still needed grapes, snatched back his land and kept him on as a contract farmer. It took him five years to clear the debt. Thanks to a boom in demand for high-quality U.S. wine and a buy-and-hold ethic for good land, Beckstoffer now owns 1,200 hectares, worth perhaps \$200 million, in Napa and Mendocino counties.

His secret for the Lake project isn't just finding land at \$25,000 a hectare (a hectare of land in Napa runs nearly \$500,000). Beckstoffer has figured out that a certain altitude—from about 600 to 730 meters—in the right part of Lake County has a heating-and-cooling cycle similar to Napa's. Find the right hill with access to water and it's a winner.

Good grapes are one thing. More than ever the wine business is about marketing; nowadays that starts with the growers. Beckstoffer and others have petitioned the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco & Firearms to designate their patches "the Red Hills District." The appellation sets the hills apart from the low-quality cabernet grown on nearby flatland.

Beckstoffer ties the price of his grapes to the retail bottle's price. With a bigger incentive to hit the \$25-a-bottle mark, a lot of technology goes into the new vineyard, geared to making handcrafted wine with the tools of big farming. Such wizardry has made it possible to produce an increasing number of high-priced wines.

But the high end may prove a victim of its own success. Between the bear market and terrorism's effect on travel, expensive wines are feeling squeezed. That leaves more room for stuff that goes for \$12 or so—and plenty of potential new business for growers like Beckstoffer.

Cakebread Cellars



December 19, 2002

Chief, Regulations Division
Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms
P.O. Box 50221
Washington, DC 20091-0221

Re: Comment and Amendment of Petition Notice 961,
Red Hills (California) Viticultural Area

Dear Chief,

We support the establishment of the Red Hills District as a new American Viticulture Area (AVA). This proposed AVA produces high-quality mountain fruit from its high elevation, red volcanic soils and climatic Region #3 temperatures and is therefore worthy of its own distinct designation.

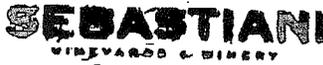
We believe the reference to Red Hills District will be important as this area has the potential to grow into a leading AVA within District 2 of the North Coast. While we understand the concern of distinguishing this region from the Oregon AVA that has applied for a similar name, the introduction of "California AVA" as a tag to this California appellation's name is likely to confuse the consumer as it is inconsistent with the other well-known appellations in our state. Therefore, we strongly urge you to approve the name "Red Hills District", which will likely become renowned as a quality California appellation just as the AVAs of Stags Leap District and Spring Mountain District.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Bruce Cakebread
President & COO

#5



December 27, 2002

Sent via Facsimile: (202) 927-8525

Chief, Regulations Division
Bureau of ATF
P.O. Box 50221
Washington, DC 20091-0221

Re: Notice No. 961 and Notice No. 960 "Red Hills"

Dear Sir or Madam:

We are writing to you in protest of Notice No. 961 and Notice No. 960 - The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) proposals to establish the "Red Hill" viticultural area in Douglas County within the State of Oregon and the "Red Hills" viticultural area of Lake County, California.

Sebastiani Vineyards, Inc is the holder of the trademark "Red Hill Vineyard", Registration number 1861951 Serial Number 74/470489 registration date 11/08/1994. We are concerned that there will exist confusion with the appellation Red Hill or Red Hills and our brand Red Hill Vineyard that is located in neither of the proposed appellations. Sebastiani has established the Red Hill Vineyard trademark at significant expense and would not be willing to relinquish our right to use with out compensation for the mark. We are concerned that the confusion of a brand and a viticultural region would be similar to the confusion with the Napa appellation and the Napa Ridge Brand. To avoid such confusion we respectfully protest the appellation designations in Notice 961 and 960 so long as we own this Mark.

Please feel free to contact me at 707-933-3205 or Eswein@sebastiani.com should you wish to discuss in further detail.

Sincerely,


Emma J. Swain
Chief Operating Officer

#6



Acacia Vineyard Canoe Ridge Vineyard Carmenet Vineyards Chalone Vineyard Château Duhart-Milon Dynamite Vineyards Echelon Vineyards Edna Valley Vineyard Hewitt Vineyard Jade Mountain Moon Mountain Vineyard Provenance Vineyards Sagelands Vineyard

THOMAS B. SELFRIDGE, *President & Chief Executive Officer*

December 16, 2002

Chief, Regulations Division
Bureau of ATF
PO Box 50221
Washington DC 20091-0221

(Attn: Notice No. 961)

RE: Comment and Amendment of Petition Notice 961, Red Hills (California) AVA

Dear Sir or Madam:

As a company that purchases grapes from growers in the Red Hills District of Lake County, California, the Chalone Wine Group enthusiastically supports designating this unique district as an American Viticulture Area. However, we feel that the name proposed by ATF, "Red Hills-California" would only lead to consumer confusion.

Consumers already recognize the term "California" on a wine label as designating that the grapes come from any place with in the vast state of California. We believe the term "Red Hills-California" would lead consumers to believe that the wine was made with a blend of Red Hills AVA and California AVA grapes.

While Oregon has also proposed a Red Hills viticultural area, its much different soils and climate produce Burgundian varietals of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay, while Lake County's Red Hills District's soils and climate have already developed a stellar reputation for the Bordeaux varietals of Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot.

To eliminate any possible confusion between growing regions in Oregon and California, we propose the use of "Red Hills District" to designate the area in Lake County.

Sincerely,

621 Airpark Road, Napa CA 94558-6272 USA

PHONE: (707) 254-4208 FAX: (707) 254-4204 EMAIL: ceo@chalonewinegroup.com



Chief, Regulations Division
BATF
P.O.Box 50221
Washington, DC 20091-0221

December 19, 2002

RE: Comment and Amendment of Petition Notice 961, Red Hills (California)
Viticultural Area

Dear Chief,

It has come to my attention, that you are considering a new AVA in California District 2. We have been purchasing grapes and making wine from the proposed "Red Hills District", for four years. We feel the red volcanic soils combined with the climatic conditions, caused by elevation, create a unique and special area.

This AVA will provide consumers with valuable information and give growers deserved recognition.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C. MacDonnell", written in a cursive style.

C.A. MacDonnell
Director of Grower Relations

707-773-1415

Notice # 961

Comment # 8



January 3, 2003

Chief, Regulations Division
Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms
P O Box 50221
Washington, DC 20091-0221

RB
1/13/03

Attn: Notice No. 961

Dear Sirs,

Pursuant to your request for comments concerning the creation of the "Red Hills District" Viticultural Area (2001-330P) in Lake County, California, I offer the following for your consideration.

Sutter Home Winery and Vineyards has grown and purchased grapes in Lake County since 1986. During that time, we have had the opportunity of observing and evaluating vineyard sites and wine grape quality throughout Lake County. It is our opinion that the proposed "Red Hills District" defines a unique grape growing sub region within the greater Clearlake Viticultural Area. The proposed "District" clearly defines an area that displays distinct soils, terrain, elevation, sunlight exposure and climate.

Red Hills has traditionally been used to describe this part of Lake County and choosing "District" to identify this geographical area seems to be more precise than the use of California or Area as a regional descriptor.

Sutter Home supports the establishment of this new AVA and contends that creating the "Red Hills District" will provide consumers with clear and accurate information concerning the source of the grapes used in making this Lake County wine.

Sincerely,

Ralph Huffsmith
RALPH HUFFSMITH
Vice President
Vineyard Operations

-----Original Message-----

From: Jack Moore [mailto:jackmoorewine@earthlink.net]
Sent: Tuesday, February 18, 2003 12:35 PM
To: nprm@atfhq.atf.treas.gov
Subject: Red Hill, Hills, Mountain AVA's

How about making the AVA "possesive" of the state in which it lies? Red Hills of California, The Red Hill of Oregon or Red Mountain of Washington??

Just a thought

Jack Moore

jackmoorewine@earthlink.net <<mailto:jackmoorewine@earthlink.net>>

cell: 415-810-2699

SNIDER VINEYARDS

62 Lucky Drive, Greenbrae, CA 94904-2407

Telephone: (415) 924-1412

Facsimile: (415) 924-6518

March 14, 2003

Via Facsimile and U.S. Mail

Chief, Regulations Division
Alcohol & Tobacco Tax & Trade Bureau
P.O. Box 50221
Washington, DC 20091-0221

and

Nancy Sutton
Alcohol & Tobacco Tax & Trade Bureau
P.O. Box 4644
Petaluma, CA 94955

Re: Further Comment on AVA Name
Notice 961, Red Hills Viticultural Area

To Whom It May Concern:

On December 23, 2002, Snider Vineyards filed a "Response to ATF Request for Comments, ATF Notice No. 961" regarding proposed names to avoid confusion between the Red Hill AVA Petition relating to a described area in Oregon and the Red Hills AVA Petition relating to the described area in Lake County, California.

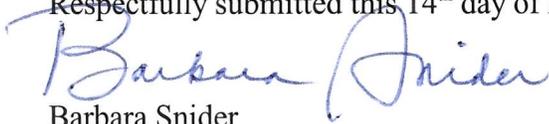
In this December 23rd filing, Snider Vineyards advocated the use of the name "Red Hills - Lake County" to avoid confusion between the Oregon and California areas and submitted evidence of several news articles demonstrating that the "Red Hills" area had already become associated with "Lake County". Since this initial filing, Snider Vineyards has been in contact with the group of owners that filed the Petition for the California AVA regarding their position regarding the name for the new AVA. Snider Vineyards has just been informed that the group has decided to seek approval for the name "Red Hills Lake County".

Snider Vineyards is filing this Further Comment to confirm that it fully supports the group's request for "Red Hills Lake County" for the new AVA name and notes that the only difference between our initial proposal in the December 23rd filing and the group's final proposal is the elimination of the hyphen between "Red Hills" and "Lake County".

Further Comment on AVA Name
Notice 961, Red Hills Viticultural Area
March 14, 2003
Page 2

Therefore, for the reasons stated above and in our December 23, 2002 Comments, Snider Vineyards urges TTB to adopt the name "Red Hills Lake County" as the name for the new California AVA.

Respectfully submitted this 14th day of March, 2003.



Barbara Snider
Snider Vineyards

cc: Sara Schorske
Compliance Service of America, Inc.

TEL: 800-400-1353
FAX: 541-271-1609
www.csa-compliance.com



POST OFFICE BOX 43
GARDINER, OR 97441
csa@csa-compliance.com

March 17, 2003

Ms. Nancy Sutton
Regulatory Specialist
Alcohol & Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau
205 Marylyn Circle
Petaluma, CA 94954

BY FEDERAL EXPRESS
415-271-1254

Re: Amendment of Proposed AVA boundaries
Notice 961, Red Hills (California) Viticultural Area

To Whom it May Concern:

This letter is submitted for the proposed viticultural area covered by NPRM No. 961, in order to amend the proposed boundaries of the new AVA. This comment, which is submitted by Compliance Service of America on behalf of the Red Hills Appellation Committee, is unanimously supported by the entire committee (whose members are listed below):

Rick Gunier - Lake County Winegrape Commission
Andy Beckstoffer- Beckstoffer Vineyards
George Buonaccorsi - Beringer Blass Wine Estates
Pete Downs - Kendall-Jackson Vineyards and Winery
Bob Roumiguere - Roumiguere Vineyards
George Myers - Snows Lake Vineyard
Ron Bartolucci - Bartolucci Vineyards

After the petition was submitted, the committee was approached by four vineyard owners located just west of the boundary line stated in the petition. Each of the vineyards is located entirely or almost entirely on the same red volcanic soils which is the primary distinguishing feature of the proposed Red Hills AVA. Moreover, each of the vineyards is located at elevations consistent with the rest of the proposed area, and in hilly terrain that conforms to the topographical character of the rest of the proposed area. As a result of the similar terrain, these four vineyards enjoy wind and temperature patterns that are similar to those in the proposed AVA, and different from the climate of the neighboring Big Valley area.

Ms. Nancy Sutton
March 17, 2003
page 2

After consideration of these facts, the committee has agreed that the AVA boundaries should be extended in order to include the four vineyards in question. In order to propose a revised boundary line that best accomplishes this purpose, we closely re-examined the soils and terrain in the area immediately west of the original proposed boundary, and have devised the revised boundary which is reflected on the following enclosures:

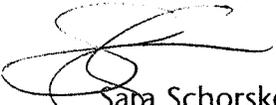
1. 8-1/2" x 11" map showing the four vineyards in question, the original boundary proposal, and the new boundary line
2. Revised narrative description
3. U.S.G.S. map showing the revised boundary (Kelseyville Quadrangle)

Also enclosed is a new color-coded exhibit showing the extent of the red volcanic soils in the Red Hills area, superimposed on a map of the new boundary line. As this map shows, the revised AVA boundary line very closely follows the boundary of the volcanic red soils in most areas. The proposed AVA boundary line deviates from the boundary of red volcanic soils in three places, for the following reasons:

1. South of the proposed AVA, the proposed boundary excludes an area of red volcanic soils that lies outside the Clear Lake AVA and contains terrain that is too mountainous for commercial viticulture.
2. West of the proposed AVA, the proposed boundary excludes an area of red volcanic soils along the top of Camelback Ridge because again, the terrain is too steep for commercial viticulture.
3. North of the proposed AVA and west of Clear Lake, the proposed boundary excludes the highest elevations of Mount Konocti, as well as part of the foothills descending toward Big Valley, overlooking the town of Kelseyville. This area, although not too steep for vineyards, is locally known as the "Kelseyville Hills," and is therefore clearly not associated with the place name "Red Hills."

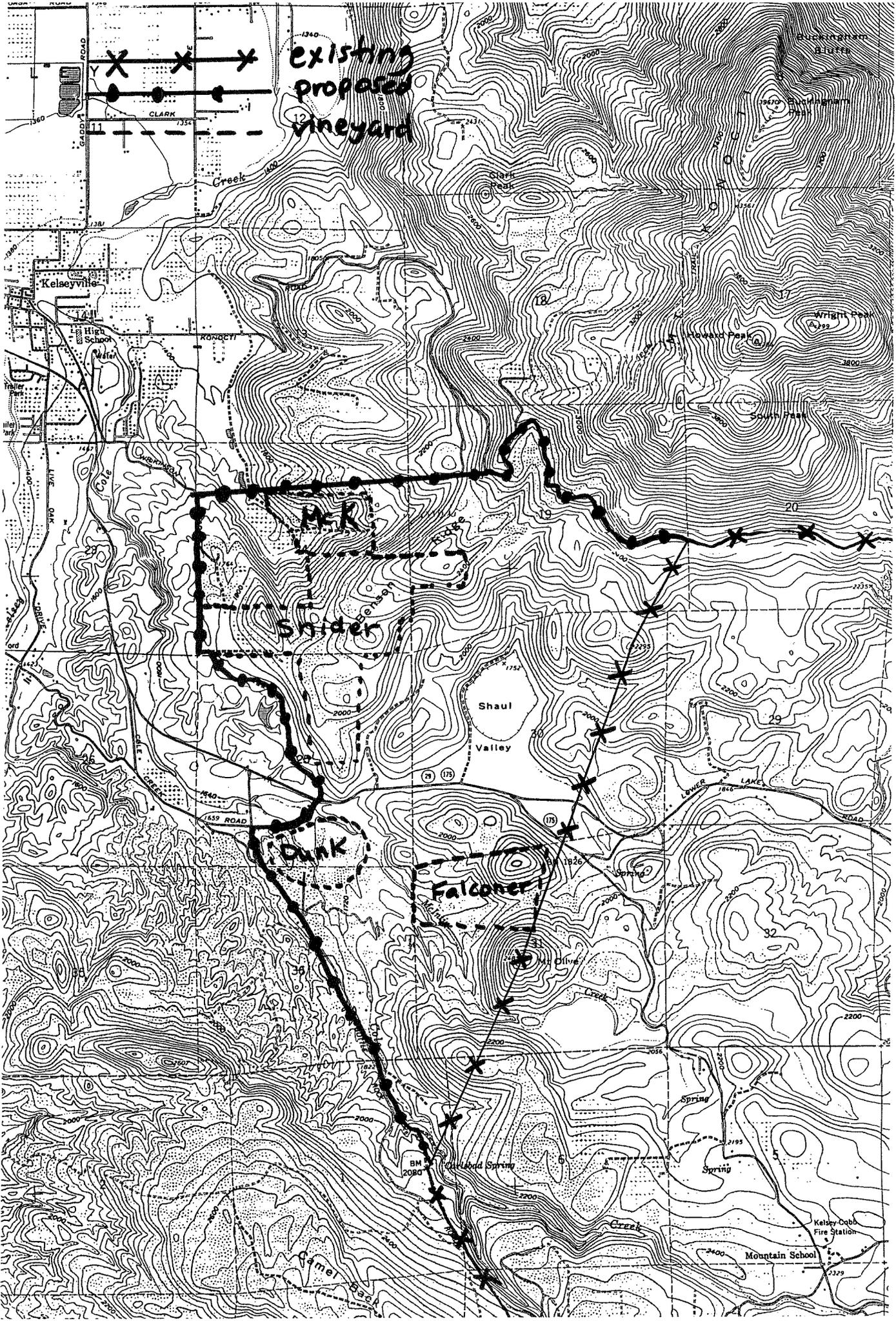
We hereby request that the new AVA proposed in Notice No. 961 be approved with the revised boundary line described in this petition amendment.

Respectfully,



Sara Schorske

c: Mary Wood, by fax 202-927-8525



existing
proposed
vineyard

Shider

Dunk

Falconer

Shaul
Valley

Kelseyville

High School

Clark Creek

GADDIS ROAD

CLARK

655 ROAD

BM 2080

Shaul Spring

Kelsey Cobb Fire Station

Mountain School

Spring

Spring

Creek

Camel

Arright Park

Spring Park

20

20

32

2200

2195

2229

2056

1926

2000

1752

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Boundaries

The proposed Red Hills Viticultural Area is located entirely within the Clear Lake viticultural area in Lake County, California, south of Clear Lake, between Lower Lake and Kelseyville. It is bounded on the east by the ridges overlooking Excelsior Valley; on the west by foothills of Mt. Konocti which separate the proposed area from Big Valley; on the north by Anderson Marsh, the shores of Clear Lake, the higher slopes of Mt. Konocti, and the distinct community of Soda Bay.

Boundaries are found on five U.S.G.S. 7.5' series topographic maps, the Kelseyville (1959, photorevised 1975) Quadrangle, Clearlake Highlands (1958, photorevised 1975) Quadrangle, Lower Lake (1993) Quadrangle, and Whispering Pines (1958, photoinspected 1975) Quadrangle.

The beginning point is the intersection of the section line between Sections 3 and 4, T12N, R7W with the shoreline of Clear Lake, on the Clearlake Highlands Quadrangle.

1. From the beginning point, follow the section line between Sections 3 and 4, T12N, R7W south to its intersection with the 1400 foot contour line.
2. Follow the 1400 foot contour line in a generally easterly and southerly direction onto the Lower Lake Quadrangle and then back onto the Clearlake Highlands Quadrangle, to its intersection with Seigler Canyon Creek, in Section 10, T12N, R7W.
3. Follow Seigler Canyon Creek westerly to its confluence with Perini Creek.
4. Follow Perini Creek southerly to its intersection with the 1800 foot contour line in Section 16, T12N, R7W.
5. Follow the 1800 foot contour line southerly, crossing from the Clearlake Highlands Quadrangle to the Whispering Pines Quadrangle, to its point of intersection with Copsey Creek.
6. Follow Copsey Creek westerly to its headwaters in Section 29, T12N, R7W.
7. Proceed westerly in a straight line to the headwaters of Bad Creek, and then due west in a straight line a short distance to Big Canyon Road.

8. Follow Big Canyon Road northerly, to its intersection with Loch Lomond Road in Section 19, T12N, R7W on the Clearlake Highlands Quadrangle.
9. Follow Loch Lomond Road westerly and then southerly to its first intersection with the 2640 foot elevation line in Section 25, T12N, R8W on the Whispering Pines Quadrangle.
10. Proceed northwesterly in a straight line to Seigler Mountain, elevation 3692.
11. Continue northwesterly along the same line to its intersection with Salmina Road in Section 23, T12N, R8W on the Clearlake Highlands Quadrangle.
12. Follow Salmina Road northerly to its intersection with Highway 175.
13. Follow Highway 175 southerly to its intersection with the section line between Sections 15 and 22, T12N, R8W, on the Clearlake Highlands Quadrangle.
14. Proceed northwesterly in a straight line to Mt. Hannah, elevation 3978.
15. Proceed southwesterly in a straight line to the point where the 3000 foot elevation line intersects the section line between Sections 16 and 17 T12N, R8W, on the Kelseyville Quadrangle.
16. Continue southwesterly along the same line to its intersection with the 2800 foot contour line which circles Boggs Lake in Section 17, T12N, R8W.
17. Follow the 2800 foot contour line northerly, westerly, and southerly, around Boggs Lake, to its intersection with Harrington Flat Road in Section 18, T12N, R8W.
18. Follow Harrington Flat Road northerly to its intersection with Bottle Rock Road.
19. Follow Bottle Rock Road northerly to its intersection with Cole Creek Road in Section 25, T13N, R9W.
20. Follow Cole Creek Road easterly to its intersection with Hwy. 29/175, and then continue in a northwesterly direction following an unnamed

unimproved road to its intersection with Wilkinson Road (which runs along the western boundary line of Section 24, T13N, R9W).

21. Follow Wilkinson Road northerly to its intersection with the 1600 foot elevation line.
22. Proceed 1.4 miles straight east to the intersection of an unnamed unimproved road and an unnamed peak 2493 feet in height in Section 19, T13N, R8W.
23. Follow that unnamed road easterly and northerly to its intersection with the 2600 foot contour line in Section 19, T13N, R8W.
24. Follow the 2600 foot contour line generally easterly 2.3 miles to its intersection with an unnamed stream near the section line between Sections 20 and 21, T13N, R8W.
25. Proceed easterly in a straight line to the intersection of Konocti Bay Road and Soda Bay Road in Section 22, T13N, R8W, on the Clearlake Highlands Quadrangle.
26. Proceed due east to the shore of Clear Lake.
27. Proceed southeasterly along the shoreline of Clear Lake to the point of beginning.

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NOTICE #1161
Comment #12

POST OFFICE BOX 43
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March 17, 2003

Ms. Nancy Sutton
Regulatory Specialist
Alcohol & Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau
205 Marylyn Circle
Petaluma, CA 94954

BY FEDERAL EXPRESS
415-271-1254

Re: Comment and Amendment of Petition re AVA Name
Notice 961, Red Hills (California) Viticultural Area

To Whom it May Concern:

ATF has proposed to establish the pending Red Hills viticultural area (NPRM 961) under the modified name "Red Hills (California)." The petitioners have previously submitted a comment proposing the alternative name "Red Hills District" for our new appellation.

After submitting that comment, it became apparent to us that the name "Red Hills District" is not sufficiently specific to distinguish our area from the many other places around the world that are also known as "Red Hills." However, because there is no place name other than Red Hills by which our proposed viticultural area is known, we cannot suggest an entirely new name, and we recognize the need to add an appropriate *geographic* modifier. We therefore submit this second, superceding comment, requesting that the name "Red Hills Lake County" be adopted for the new appellation.

This comment, which is submitted by Compliance Service of America on behalf of the Red Hills Appellation Committee, is unanimously supported by the entire committee (whose members are listed below):

Rick Gunier - Lake County Winegrape Commission
Andy Beckstoffer- Beckstoffer Vineyards
George Buonaccorsi - Beringer Blass Wine Estates
Pete Downs - Kendall-Jackson Vineyards and Winery

Bob Roumiguere - Roumiguere Vineyards
George Myers - Snows Lake Vineyard
Ron Bartolucci - Bartolucci Vineyards

Support for the name "Red Hills Lake County"

The petitioners considered various possibilities to modify the appellation name. We strongly feel that Red Hills Lake County is the best and most logical name for the proposed appellation. Our conclusion is supported by the following reasons and evidence:

1. "Lake County" is more specific than "California."

We feel the larger geographic area "California" is not an acceptable alternative. It has become obvious that use of "California" as a modifier will not be specific enough to distinguish our area from other possible grapegrowing areas. We became convinced of this when we learned that ATF recently received petitions for two proposed AVAs in Oregon. Both of the petitioned areas are locally known as "Red Hill(s)," and both petitions initially included those two words in the requested appellation names. Logically, if there are two Red Hills areas in a state as small as Oregon, the likelihood of other areas known as Red Hills within California, an area much larger than Oregon, must be quite high.

2. The proposed area has always been linked to Lake County whenever it is mentioned in the local and wine-related press. The proposed Red Hills AVA has been mentioned in print numerous times in the last five years, in articles featuring the Red Hills area, prominent area grapegrowers, and/or the growth of premium viticulture in Lake County. In every article, the area is specifically associated with Lake County. Copies of the following selection of eleven articles illustrating this fact are enclosed (with mentions of the Red Hills and Lake County highlighted):

- a. "Red Soil, Red Grapes, but not Red Ink," Dan Clarke, *Wines & Vines*, February 1998.
- b. "Beckstoffer Vineyards," Gerald D. Boyd, *Vineyard & Winery Management*, March/April 1999.
- c. Lake County Bears Fruit - California's Lesser Known North Coast County Gets Respect," Scott Ferguson, *Wine Business Monthly*, May 2000.
- d. "Value Vineyards? Growers Bet on Future of Lake County," *Vineyard & Winery Management*, November/December 2000.

- e. "More Vineyards, Four More Wineries Slated for Lake County," Scott Ferguson, *St. Helena Star*, July 5, 2001.
- f. "Grape Grower - Andy Beckstoffer," Cyril Penn, *Wine Business Monthly*, May 2002.
- g. "The Appellation Trail," Quentin Hardy, *Forbes*, September 16, 2002.
- h. "Lake County Growers Seek Red Hills Appellation," Uclia Wang, *The Press Democrat*, November 5, 2002.
- i. "ATF Considers New Appellations in Oregon and California," Lynn Alley, *The Wine Spectator*, November 9, 2002.
- j. "Make Way for Lake," Larry Walker, *Wines & Vines*, January 2003.
- k. "Beckstoffer Looks To Lake for Cabernet," Larry Walker, *Wines & Vines*, January 2003

Requested name for use on wine labels

For the reasons described above, we hereby request that the new AVA proposed in NPRM No. 961 be approved as the "Red Hills Lake County" American Viticultural Area.

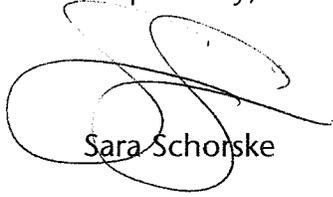
On behalf of the wineries who purchase Red Hills grapes and who plan to use the new appellation on their wine, we have been asked to request that TTB approve the name of our proposed AVA in the following form, in order to allow for flexibility in label design. This format follows the precedent set in the approval of Sonoma County Green Valley (27 CFR §9.57) and Solano County Green Valley (27 CFR §9.44).

The name of the viticultural area described in this section is "Red Hills" qualified by the words "Lake County" in direct conjunction with the name "Red Hills." On a label the words "Lake County" may be reduced in type size to the minimum allowed in 27 CFR 4.38(b).

Ms. Nancy Sutton
March 17, 2003
page 4

Thank you for your consideration of this petition amendment.

Respectfully,



Sara Schorske

Encl.

c: Mary Wood, by fax 202-927-8525

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Wines & Vines

Feb, 1998

Lake County. (viticulture)(A Wines and Vines Special Report: Harvest 1997)

Author/s: Dan Clarke

Red Soil, Red Grapes, but not Red Ink

Land suitable for high-quality vineyards is in short supply. Affordable land in this category is rarer still.

It's become an open secret that the red dirt of Lake County is capable of producing outstanding red grape varieties. That it is relatively affordable is making it doubly attractive to vineyard developers and the boom is on.

Plantings in the area actually began in the 1870s and, by the turn of the century, Lake County's reputation for quality had encouraged growth to over 5,000 vineyard acres. However, the passage of prohibition in 1919 killed the industry in Lake County and replanting of vineyards didn't begin until the 1960s.

Currently the county has about 3,400 bearing acres planted to premium winegrapes. Their assessor's office suggests that land purchased for vineyard development in the last couple of years could mean that total vineyard acreage could soon be double the present figure.

Lake County is roughly northeast of the Napa Valley. The county takes its name from Clear Lake which is the largest natural body of water lying wholly within California. The lake is roughly 19 miles long and upwards of 9 miles wide and its presence tends to moderate the climate. Air drains toward the lake in the evenings and moves out toward the surrounding vineyards and pear and walnut orchards during the day.

While Lake County can be very hot during the day, it cools considerably during the evenings. The daily high to low variance during the growing season is generally greater than in other North Coast locations. Most of its vineyards lie at an elevation of 1,300 feet or higher.

A diverse number of varieties have been planted in the county and current opinion is that those lower-lying vineyards in the more fertile soils are better suited to Chardonnay and Sauvignon blanc. The hillside vineyards, while not exclusively planted to reds, seem to be developing as prime red grape territory, especially for Cabernet Sauvignon.

Lake County is included in the prestigious North Coast appellation. Although it accounts for only about 5% of the winegrapes grown in the region, growers proudly announce that wines from their grapes win more awards per acre of vineyard than any other area of the world.

Mike Boer is general manager of Andy Beckstoffer's Mendocino Vineyard Co. In addition to managing the firm's Mendocino properties, he has spent a considerable amount of time in analyzing the company's recently purchased Amber Knolls ranch in the Red Hills area southwest of the lake and of 4,200-foot Mount Konocti. The 452-acre parcel, once home to a walnut orchard, will be developed exclusively for Cabernet Sauvignon. Boer says his company was originally attracted to the site because of the soils... and the price. Initial concerns about the

temperatures were found to be unfounded when monitoring by Adcon Telemetry units indicated that accumulated degree-days to be virtually the same as in Oakville and Ukiah.

Mendocino Vineyards plans development in phases over a five-year period. There is a history of walnut farming on the property and Boer feels more comfortable doing what he calls "agricultural conversion," rather than wild land conversion ("sometimes you can't tell what's underneath," he says). Amber Knolls is situated at elevations between 1,880 and 2,340 feet and Boer's first priority will be to develop the most effective drainage system. Once that is accomplished he will begin siting the vineyard. The soils he describes as "pretty red in color. They range from loam to day loam with substantial gravel content. There is good water storage capacity." The vineyard will begin life on a drip system for irrigation and fertigation.

"Because of the erodability of the slopes we'll eventually go to a no-till situation, with the possibility of a native cover crop. We want a stable hillside," says Boer. Seeking a distinct difference in harvest dates, he has selected two Cabernet clones for the initial 100-acre phase. Installation of the drainage system will take place this spring, with planting scheduled for some time after June. It will be half a decade before the first grapes from Amber Hills are crushed, but its developers are confident. "We feel good Cabernets are hard to find," comments Boer "and so we were looking for an excellent Cabernet site and that's what we feel we found."

Although the Beckstoffer organization may be the newest kid on the block, some industry heavyweights have been creating a presence in the Red Hills area for a decade.

Beringer planted 150 acres there in 1989 (and has since added an additional 75 acres on adjacent land). At nearly the same time, Roumiguere Vineyards began developing 136 acres of vineyard about four miles away.

David Tuttle is vineyard supervisor for Beringer's Clear Mountain Vineyard. "Old timers planted dry-land walnuts in this soil," he says. "We could never have developed this without drip irrigation." He is concerned with erosion control and maintaining deer fencing, but he feels these problems are offset by the virtues of the soils and climate in the Red Hills. His Zinfandel and Cabernet are planted in "volcanic soils with a lot of small granular rock. Some areas have a lot of obsidian and there are some real deep red soils without too much rock," but all, he says, are well-drained and naturally stress the grapes. "It's a fabulous climate up here," enthuses Tuttle, "air movement is almost everything. The good air movement gives us a real long exposure to the sun. We're frost-free on these ridges; that gives us a plus over the valleys. Budbreak is a lot later for us. In the (Napa) valley they've got canes 15 to 16 inches long before I get started up here, but (later) while they're setting down in the fog we've got 14 to 15 hours of sunlight."

The Roumiguere property, dubbed "Red Hills Vineyard," is planted to Cabernet Sauvignon (90 acres) and Sauvignon blanc (45 acres). Soils there are primarily red volcanic with obsidian - they're deep and very well draining. From the beginning, all the fruit has been contracted to Robert Mondavi for their coastal program and the Cabernet now is reputed to be among the winery's favorites. However, when Bob Roumiguere showed other grapegrowers where he planned to develop his Red Hills Vineyard, more than a few eyebrows were raised, according to his son Rob. "It was a real leap of faith on my dad's part to purchase that walnut orchard and convert it to vineyard," he recalls. "There were not a lot of people in Lake County at that time with experience in hillside vineyards, but he felt very confident that Cabernet Sauvignon belonged there and that Sauvignon blanc would also do well."

Tuttle calls the Clear Mountain Vineyard a "very consistent" producer for Beringer, yielding six tons per acre of excellent quality Cabernet Sauvignon. About one-third of the vineyard was machine-harvested in 1997 and adjustable vertical trellising will mean much more of the hillside grapes will be machine-picked in future. While Tuttle speaks of loving to "conquer mountains" he acknowledges it's not always that easy. "Don't go butting heads with Mother Nature," he cautions. "She can make a hero of you - or a schoolboy - real quick."

Ron Bartolucci is a Lake County grower with extensive background. The former director of vineyard operations for Fetzer is now developing his own vineyard in the Glasgow Grade area near Lower Lake. This is about 15 miles from the vineyards in the Red Hills. "There's a tremendous amount of red soils all around the area," he says. "They're loaded with rocks - from rocks half the size of a vehicle to little pebbles. Our property is situated between 1,750 and 1,950 feet. The rocks will vary in number, size and depth depending on location on the slope." His slopes range from 15 to 30%. The soils are mostly of the Sobrante-Guenoc-Hambright complex and Bartolucci says they contain some loam, some clay and some are gravelly, but all drain away well.

Part of the reason quality in Lake County is now so apparent is improvements in viticultural practices, according to Bartolucci. "Twenty years ago a lot of people were new to grape growing and (many) were growing grapes like other crops. There are substantial differences now and the quality of fruit today is far superior to that of 10 years ago. Most of my vineyards have been replanted, allowing for tighter spacing, new rootstocks, different clones, different trellis systems - I'm learning all the time; I think we're all learning. If you don't produce the quality, you're a commodity ... and we don't want to be just a commodity."

Bartolucci is preparing his Glasgow Grade vineyard for Fetzer's Bonterra program, in which all grapes must be certified as organically grown and be of superior quality. He believes his soils will hold water because of the loam and clay, yet will drain well because of the rocks. The vines will be started on a drip system, but Bartolucci feels the soils are such that he will never have to water again after the fourth to sixth leaf. He's planting five different clones of Cabernet Sauvignon to "give the winemakers a spice rack" of flavors.

Bartolucci says he is excited about the renowned winemakers who are committing to fruit from the county, mentioning Stag's Leap, Benziger, Sonoma Creek, The Hess Collection and Mondavi as evidence of growing acceptance. "The trend today is to red wine," says Bartolucci. "In California there are a lot of places that can grow decent Chardonnay, but not a lot can grow great reds. Without a doubt, we're going to produce some great winegrapes here."

Rob Roumiguere echoes his enthusiasm. "It's amazing the development that's going on now. People have discovered these red soils. What's exciting is that finally Lake County is getting the recognition for the quality of fruit that we've been producing up here for years."

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VINEYARD & WINERY MANAGEMENT

INFORMATION YOU CAN TAKE TO THE BANK.

BECKSTOFFER VINEYARDS

Gerald D. Boyd
March/April, 1999

If you listen to Andy Beckstoffer talking about to whom he will and will not sell grapes, you might get the impression that Beckstoffer is arrogant. "One of the first things I ask a perspective buyer is 'What's the price of the bottle of wine you will produce from these grapes?' If you say under \$20, then I say 'let's talk about it...but eventually, you're not able to afford us.'"

Is that arrogance? Beckstoffer prefers to call it honesty. "I'm trying to sell grapes to people who are looking for quality. Wineries will pay more for quality. That's what this business is all about. I take a lot of pride in being a farmer, a grower of grapes for fine wine." He reckons the premium segment of the market starts at \$15, but says that he sells grapes to winemakers who produce wines selling for \$20 or more.

The business Andy Beckstoffer is all about is Beckstoffer Vineyards, the largest family-owned vineyard company in the Napa Valley. In 1973, at the tender age of 28, W. Andrew Beckstoffer invested \$7,500 of his own money to buy what was essentially a company he founded in 1967. After graduating with an M.B.A from Dartmouth College in 1966, Beckstoffer, a native Virginian, became Director of Corporate Acquisitions Strategies for Heublein, in Connecticut. One of his first moves was to recommend that Heublein enter the wine business in California, which resulted in Heublein buying United Vintners, Inc., owners of Inglenook and Italian Swiss Colony. He says that working with acquisitions helped him to be in the right place at the right time.

Eventually, Italian Swiss Colony went out with the Little Old Winemaker and everyone with any history in the California wine business knows what happened to Inglenook. Here's Beckstoffer's quick take on the demise of Inglenook: "Heublein had a fight with the grape growers; they hired a guy who was brand oriented, but didn't understand the premium wine business."

Beckstoffer understands the premium wine business, stating that one of the first tenets of the premium wine business is that wineries need grapes. So in 1970, Beckstoffer conceived and founded Vinifera Development Corporation (VDC), to provide premium grapes for Inglenook and Beaulieu Vineyard. Three years later, He bought 75 percent of VDC from Heublein and renamed it Vinifera Vineyards. By 1978, Andy Beckstoffer had acquired vineyard acreage in Mendocino, Carneros and the Napa Valley, became founding director of the Napa Valley Grape Growers Association (NVGGA) and restructured Vinifera Vineyards, renaming it Beckstoffer Vineyards. Not bad for a guy who attended Virginia Tech on a football scholarship and graduated with a degree in engineering.

But that's only the first twenty years of Andy Beckstoffer's association with California wine grape growing. Today, his vineyard holdings include more than 2500 acres of



prime North Coast vineyards in Napa, Mendocino and Lake counties, with a value of more than \$100 million. Along the way, Beckstoffer, leading the NVGGA, obtained a definition of a Napa Valley Winery as one that uses 75 percent Napa Valley grapes, while becoming the largest independent grower and largest seller of wine grapes in the North Coast.

Beckstoffer looks younger than his 54 years. Tall, tanned and slender with an ever-present smile and the softest of Southern accents, Andy Beckstoffer talks like a grape grower and dresses like a grape grower, but maintains that he is not now, nor never was a viticulturist. "I'm an entrepreneur, not a viticulturist," claims Beckstoffer. "When I started Vinifera Development Corporation in 1970, I was lucky enough to have Andre Tchelistcheff of Beaulieu Vineyard working with me. Most people think of Andre first as a winemaker, but he was more of a grape grower than a winemaker. Later, I was fortunate enough to have young talented viticulturists like Bob Steinhauer and Roy Harris working with me.

Grapes may be the end product for Beckstoffer Vineyards, but the man in the front office, everything comes down to doing business. "We run as a business, believing that good quality is good business. A lot of grape growers today are bad businessmen," maintains Beckstoffer. For him, the best business approach combines the old with the new. "The rise of grape quality will come on the back of technology. If we adapt technology in the vineyards better, and we should be planting 2003 technology not 1999, it will allow us to produce the best wine in the world sometime in early 2000."

When selecting the types of grapes he grows, however, Beckstoffer is strictly a conservative. "We're fairly conservative when it comes to grape types and we manage everything in the vineyards ourselves. Andre Tchelistcheff told me that if I want to diversify, do so with clones not grapes. I believe the future will be site specific with our clonal diversity expressing the soils." Beckstoffer is not interested in the trendy zinfandel, "there's too much of it around... anyway, I can plant cabernet sauvignon where I plant zinfandel, so I plant cabernet."

He'd like to grow pinot noir but says he can't afford to, so he sells his pinot noir grapes to a winery, like Acacia, a long-time Carneros-based pinot specialist. Acacia 1995 Carneros Pinot Noir Beckstoffer Vineyard is an example of the symbiosis that develops between Beckstoffer fruit and a winery that understands how to treat it. The grapes come from Beckstoffer's Las Amigas vineyard that he purchased in 1993 from Louis Martini. Intensely fruity with layers of spice and ripe berries, it is rich and supple with long silky tannins and great length through the finish. The 1995 Acacia Pinot Noir is a good example of the Carneros spicy-berry Pinot style.

Beckstoffer sells to 40 wineries statewide and says the wines produced from his grapes are so good because wineries and growers get along so well. "I have to sell everything I grow, so it must be high quality. I can't lose money in the vineyard or make it up in the winery by blending.

For a few years, Beckstoffer set aside a small amount of his Mendocino grapes for a private label called Fremont Creek, but decided in 1993, that grape growing was more his thing. "I didn't like the travel, the whole business of being out there representing your winery, the winemaker dinners. We're important in the real estate business but we're not a logical extension of a winery.

To supply all 40 wineries, Beckstoffer has amassed vineyards in Napa, Mendocino and

Lake counties. The bulk of his acquisitions are in Napa County, from the 221-acre Georges III Vineyard in Rutherford, planted to cabernet sauvignon and merlot, to the 12-acre Beckstoffer No. 1 Cabernet Sauvignon vineyard also in Rutherford. Vineyard Georges III is the former Beaulieu Vineyard No. 3, just southeast of Caymus Winery. A noteworthy expression of the quality and intensity of character that come from Georges grapes can be found in the 1995 Delectus, a small production cabernet sauvignon, owned by Gerhard Reisacher and Linda Parker. A blend of 92 percent cabernet sauvignon, with small amounts of merlot and cabernet franc, Delectus has big textured flavors, balanced with spicy French oak accents. It features the firmness of cabernet sauvignon, tempered by the suppleness of merlot, with a hint of cabernet franc.

Another showcase wine that illustrates the concentration of Beckstoffer fruit is the Guenoc 1995 Napa Valley Beckstoffer IV Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon Reserve. All cabernet, from the 25-acre vineyard purchased in 1983, this luscious wine was aged in French oak, and shows forward ripe blackberry aromas and berry and chocolate flavors. There is a plumpness to the fruit as though Merlot was in the blend and the wine has great length and excellent balance.

Cabernet sauvignon and merlot are the primary varieties in the Beckstoffer Napa vineyards, but he also grows a little chardonnay, mainly in two Carneros vineyards, and a touch of Sauvignon blanc in the Melrose Vineyard, within the Rutherford Viticulture Area. Stag's Leap Wine Cellars has been buying chardonnay from Beckstoffer for years. Grapes for the 1996 Stag's Leap Wine Cellars Beckstoffer Ranch Chardonnay comes off the Carneros Creek Vineyard, purchased by Beckstoffer in 1978. The aromatics are an inviting blend of ripe pears and spicy French oak. The buttery textures play off the ripe flavors and crisp acidity. It has excellent fruit expression and carries the 14.2 percent alcohol very well.

The largest single vineyard under the Beckstoffer umbrella is the 502-acre Vinifera Vineyard in the Ukiah AVA, planted to cabernet sauvignon, merlot, chardonnay, gewurztraminer, chenin blanc and viognier. The smallest plot owned by Beckstoffer Vineyards in Mendocino County is the 51-acre Stanford Vineyard. In 1998, Beckstoffer purchased 175 acres near Ukiah that he has named the Mendocino 101 Vineyard. Beckstoffer owns more than 1,000 acres of vineyards in the Ukiah AVA, but none in the trendy Anderson Valley. "We started out buying land around Ukiah and we want to be in the black grape business. The Anderson Valley is very good for sparkling wine grapes, but risky for still wines."

"Everything in Mendocino is bolder," comments Beckstoffer on the characteristics of Mendocino grapes. "Mendocino has a different microclimate than Napa, but you can't do the same things in Mendocino that you can do in Napa. The quality of fruit is there in Mendocino, but we are still not that far along in the vineyard in Mendocino as we are in the Napa Valley. I think we can grow more unique flavors with Napa reds, but Mendocino is the place to go for chardonnay."

A year earlier, he bought 462 acres in the Red Hills AVA of Lake County and planted it completely to cabernet sauvignon. "I plan on having 1,000 acres in Lake County and, in fact, my goal is to own 1,000 acres of vineyards in each of the three counties." Sonoma Coast, an appellation that has growing support by many large wineries and growers, is important says Beckstoffer. "I think it's more meaningful than a California appellation and it says more to the consumer." He believes that Kendall-Jackson, that presently uses the California appellation on its wines, would welcome a California Coast appellation.

So, why are there no Beckstoffer vineyard holdings in Sonoma County? "We tried to get into Sonoma, but we couldn't find anything we liked and we don't have an established vineyard operation there like we do in Napa and Mendocino. If I go into Sonoma, it must be hundreds of acres, so I can set up a cost-efficient farming operation. But Beckstoffer doesn't completely rule out a Sonoma vineyard. "Ultimately, I would like to think we'll have an operation in Sonoma." Having an organized farming operation is key to the success of Beckstoffer's vineyards, but he realizes that we must plan now for the future. "We are going to have a labor shortage in the future and the best way I see of handling this problem is to mechanize and treat our people better."

Cabernet sauvignon and merlot are the meat and potatoes of the Beckstoffer grape portfolio.

"We're pretty conservative when it comes to varietal selection in the vineyard," says Beckstoffer. "I believe the future will be site specific, so we're going to clonal diversity, expressing the soils. Within the cabernet and merlot clonal ranges, we take a pretty aggressive approach." In the Beckstoffer 198-acre Carneros Lake vineyard, there is a little pinot noir, but Beckstoffer believes that merlot is right for Carneros. "Carneros merlot is black and classic." One departure from the traditional North Coast red varieties are small plots of syrah and viognier he's growing in two of his Mendocino properties.

Terroir, or "expressing the soils" as Beckstoffer puts it, is a topic that holds great interest for Andy Beckstoffer. "We're trying to express the terroir in our vineyards as much as possible, but you also have to get winemaking to do it as well. I won't sell grapes to you unless you agree to single site influence. The vineyard must not only be good, but it must be distinctive." He mentions the To-Kalon Vineyard in Oakville as a good example of a single vineyard expressing its terroir. Of the 240 acres at To-Kalon, Beckstoffer owns 89 acres, planted to the five Bordeaux red varieties. Most of the rest of To-Kalon belongs to the Robert Mondavi Winery, which also owns the brand name.

When selling grapes to his winery clients, Beckstoffer uses what he calls "the bottle price formula." "It's an attitude that asks what is the end bottle price. As a standard, vineyard designated grapes should be 100 times the retail price of the wine, or saying it another way, the grapes cost 25% to 26% of the FOB wine price. Of course, we negotiate and then average the cost based on production and blends to vines. "The Napa Valley is just about planted out," says Beckstoffer. "There 's a little land left on the hillsides, maybe 1,000 acres, but that's it. A lot of the existing vineyards need to be replanted to higher quality. Some of the land in Napa, especially in the richer soils by the river that is being planted shouldn't."

Cost is the main factor in buying vineyards in the Napa Valley. But even if you have the money, there is very little land remaining in the valley that can be planted. "But I see some of the land being planted in Napa, like near the river where the soils are too rich, that shouldn't be planted." Beckstoffer believes that to be involved in Napa viticulture, you're either a player or you're not. At present prices, Beckstoffer estimates that an acre of vineyard land, "if you can find it," would cost \$40,000 to \$50,000 to buy and another \$25,000 to \$30,000 to plant. He says that Sonoma costs would be close, with land costs in Mendocino a little less.

Another consideration that has weight in Beckstoffer's decision to buy vineyard land is appellation recognition and as might be expected, he has an interesting take on that topic. "In export, California is an extremely important appellation. Napa is not that well known, so Sonoma just falls off the screen." Even with his pragmatic approach to selling

grapes, Beckstoffer believes that Napa Valley grapes are a specialty item and not a commodity. "The identity of Napa-grown grapes carries clear through to the consumer and it is getting more so."

"If you're going to play in the Napa product segment, you have to be in the segment." As for the current controversy swirling around the use of hillside land in the Napa Valley, Beckstoffer sees it as a conservation issue. "The issue has become polarized between the growers and environmentalists. We need to police what exists now and move the issue more to the center, with a slight nudge toward the environmentalists."

Andy Beckstoffer has made a success of premium grape growing on California's north coast by careful planning, good organization and maintaining control over his entire vineyard operation. To see where Beckstoffer Vineyards is going in the future, just watch the labels of California's best wineries for the Beckstoffer vineyard name.

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Lake County Bears Fruit California's Lesser-Known North Coast County Gets Respect

By Scott Ferguson
News Editor

California's North Coast AVA is a diverse cluster of microclimates heavily influenced by the whims of the Pacific Ocean. It has become known worldwide for its fine wines but Lake County, an area within this renowned grapegrowing region, has not yet caught the wave of worldwide acclaim that has brought areas such as Napa and Sonoma a healthy industry.

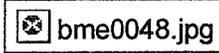


Four counties make up the North Coast AVA: Sonoma, Napa, Mendocino and Lake, all bearing the North Coast pedigree, which can buoy grape prices well above \$3,000 a ton. All but Lake County, which—despite thousands of acres of potential vineyard land—has yet to blossom into a fruitful viticulture industry.

Napa's reputation as a world-class wine producer has allowed grapegrowers to garner top dollar for their crops; Cabernet Sauvignon fetched prices as high as \$5,000 a ton last year and for all varieties the average price was \$1,903 per ton.

Sonoma has also become world renowned for its ultra-premium wines. And so has Mendocino, establishing itself upon the sturdy North Coast reputation as a heavy hitter.

While a few Lake County wines have recently received accolades, its reputation is still under construction.



Lake County's more than 3,000 acres of vineyards account for less than five percent of California's North Coast winegrape production.

Growers Are Investing

Over the past couple years, Lake County's winegrowing industry has been quietly gaining momentum. A number of high-profile wine producers and grapegrowers from Napa and Sonoma staked their claim in Lake County, developing hundreds of acres of vineyards there.

Beckstoffer Vineyards, one of Napa Valley's most successful grapegrowers, planted 600 acres of Cabernet Sauvignon in Lake County in 1997, while Napa's **Beringer Wine Estates** and Sonoma's **Kendall-Jackson** wineries have invested a significant amount of time and money into vineyards in this least known county of the North Coast region.

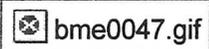
Kendall-Jackson, one of California's largest wineries— producing 3.5 million cases a year—is no stranger to Lake County. In fact, its roots began there. Owner **Jess Jackson** started with 80 acres and a small winery in Lake County in the early 1970s.

Kendall-Jackson vineyard director **Pete Richmond** has confidence that Lake County grapes can produce ultra-premium wine. K-J currently farms 600 acres of grapes in Lake County.

Lake County Agricultural Commissioner **Mark Lockhart** is not surprised by the recent interest in Lake County: "It's not a question of why. It's a question of why not Lake County."

Before Prohibition made winegrapes virtually worthless, Lake County boasted 5,000 acres of grapes. Those vineyards were slowly converted to walnut and pear orchards.

Today there is, indeed, a renaissance occurring in the viticulture industry in Lake County, with a dramatic increase in vineyard plantings. In 1991 there were 90 acres, today there are 5,500 acres and another 2,300 acres under development, according to the Lake County Agriculture Department.



"This part of the North Coast is undiscovered," said **Shannon Gunier**, executive director for the Lake County Winegrape Commission. "The land is still cheap and the county is user-friendly," she said. "We've had our struggles, but we're starting to attract some high-quality growers. We're striving to grow ultra-premium grapes here," she added.

Quality Fruit...On Hills

In a county looking for any kind of economic spark, county officials welcome vineyard development with open arms. "We've received great support from the county board of supervisors," said **Bob Roumiguere**, chairman of the Lake County Winegrape Commission and owner of **Roumiguere Vineyards**.

The county has been working with the **University of California** agricultural extension department in an effort to determine what other grape varieties might thrive in this microclimate, experimenting with 40 different varieties, and concentrating on those of the Rhône.

Sauvignon Blanc, grown on the valley floor, has been the perennial variety in the past, until success with red varieties spurred many growers to start planting varieties such as Cabernet Sauvignon--the cash crop. Varieties such as **Zinfandel**, **Petite Sirah** and **Merlot** have been planted instead of Sauvignon Blanc.

Additionally, many growers are planting on the hills where they hope to replicate the sought-after grapes grown on Howell Mountain or Spring Mountain in Napa Valley.

Beckstoffer Vineyards chairman **Andy Beckstoffer**, whose company garners some of the highest prices in California for grapes grown on the hills and valley floor of Napa and Mendocino, is betting on Lake County to produce the kind of fruit to which his clients have become accustomed.

After a year of searching the North Coast for new vineyard land he chose Lake County. "We like the soil and climate there," said Beckstoffer. "We think we found a special place."

Beckstoffer's Lake County vineyard development is in the Red Hills in the southwest region of the county near the city of Lakeport, where Kendall-Jackson and Beringer also have vineyards.

The volcanic soils in the Red Hills are perfect for growing Cabernet, Richmond said. "Warm days rapidly turn to cold nights here," said Richmond. "It's a good place to grow Cabernet, because it's able to hang on the vine longer. We've never harvested before the first of October."

Jim Frisinger, director of North Coast vineyard operations for Beringer Wine Estates, said he was surprised by the good quality of fruit that came from their Lake County vineyards. Beringer planted 220 acres of grapes, much of it **Zinfandel** intended for their popular White Zinfandel. "We shifted the fruit to our reds," said Frisinger. "It had the right sugars, color and tannins to make great wine."

While the quality of fruit has been encouraging, Frisinger still believes there's room for improvement: "We're still learning to farm this area and the quality will improve as we learn to farm it better," he says.

Another attractive element in the hills of Lake County, is that they are above the frost line, preventing growers from losing valuable fruit to frost. Not having to battle frost can also help conserve water if sprinklers are used as a method of frost protection.

According to Gunier, Lake County has ample water to support this burgeoning viticulture industry. "We've got the lake," she said of the 68-square-mile Clear Lake, located in the middle of the county. Also, growers have had success finding ground water to supply the vineyards they are planting throughout the county in Lakeport, Kelseyville, Cobb Mountain and Clear Lake Oaks.

Lower-Cost Land

Indeed, favorable growing conditions in many parts of Lake County is what has drawn reputable growers to the area, but the county's low land cost is another reason Lake County is appealing, especially as growers scramble to meet the strong demand for North Coast grapes.

Lake County agricultural land is much cheaper than land in Sonoma, Napa and Mendocino. According to Lake County appraiser Dan Grothe, the Red Hills land, where hundreds of acres have been developed into vineyards, costs between \$3,000 and \$6,000 per acre. Compare that to vineyard land in Napa, selling for more than \$100,000 an acre.

According to St. Helena realtor Jeffrey Warren of James Warren & Sons, a 30-acre hay field in Napa's famous Stags Leap District sold for \$3.6 million, or \$120,000 per acre.

While land is still affordable in Lake County, prices are expected to rise quickly with the renewed interest in grapegrowing. "You're not going to find these kinds of prices for long," Grothe said. "Areas like the Red Dirt Hill are becoming highly sought after."

He said land that sold for \$3,000 to \$6,000 per acre a few years ago is now selling for \$7,000 to \$12,000 per acre today, if not higher.

Lake County winegrowers have a lot to be encouraged about these days, but perhaps the most significant recent momentum boost was the sale of Guenoc Winery. A consistent wine producer even before Prohibition, Guenoc farms some 400 acres of vineyards and has produced wine for more than a century. The 20,000-acre property has much more plantable acreage.

Its recent purchase for \$100 million by global wine company Stimson Lane Vineyards and Estates from Washington has been very encouraging to county officials, growers and wine producers.

"To have a quality winery like Stimson Lane come here substantiates our feeling that we are a potentially very important member of the world-famous North Coast appellation," said Roumiguere. "Having such an established premium producer plunk down big money for the area's biggest winery adds to Lake County's credibility as grapegrowing region."

Despite the increased vineyard development, Lake County's reputation as an ultra-premium winegrowing region has yet to be solidified.

James Laube, wine critic for the *Wine Spectator*, said Lake County is still "lagging behind Napa and Sonoma and Mendocino. There are a few exceptional wines, but generally they don't stand up to the wines of Napa and Sonoma." The Lake County Winegrape Commission hopes to change that reputation. The commission, established in 1991, is different than that of other winegrowing regions, which usually establish voluntary associations that charge dues. The difference is that this commission mandates growers producing 25,000 tons or more to contribute one percent of gross sales to fund the Lake County Winegrape Commission and its programs.

The commission's \$105,000 budget offers grower education as well as a much needed public relations campaign to promote the area as a world-class winegrowing region. **WBM**

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"Value Vineyards?" Growers Bet on Future of Lake County



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Though part of the same North Coast American Viticultural Area, Lake County receives only a fraction of the attention paid its sister Napa and Sonoma Counties, and even Mendocino County is far better known.

One reason is that Lake County has only 3700 acres of vineyards, one-tenth the number in Napa, and only half a dozen wineries. Only Guenoc Winery has attained a worldwide reputation, although others make award-winning wines.

Lake County is still a growers' county, not one dominated by wineries. Recently, however, out-of-county wineries have begun to recognize its potential, especially in view of the \$7000 to \$10,000 per acre prices for top vineyard land, one-tenth that just over Mount St. Helena in Napa Valley. Local experts expect the current 3700 acres of vineyards will double within five years.

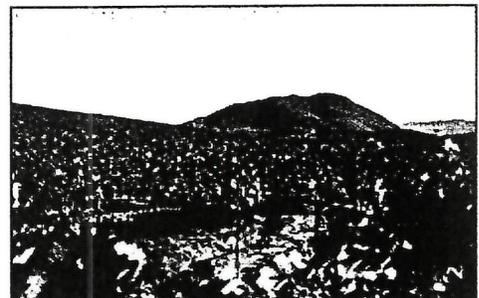
Wineries with property in Lake County include Kendall-Jackson-Lake County is where the winery originated- Beringer, Louis Martini and Sutter Home. Napa-based Beckstoffer Vineyards is developing prime land, too.

Though still small, Lake County's grape acreage has increased considerably from fewer than 100 acres in 1965, but it's still far from the 7000 acres that supported 36 wineries before Prohibition turned the county to pears and walnuts. Those crops are now falling rapidly to the more lucrative grape vines, a move exacerbated by foreign competition in tree fruit markets.

Lake County is one of only two counties in California that has created a wine grape commission to promote its crop. (Lodi-Woodbridge is the other.) The commission assesses growers a small fee to fund the effort, and has recently initiated a promotional and advertising campaign with the funds it has raised. Managing the Lake County Winegrape Commission is executive director Shannon Gunier; president of the Lake County Grape Growers Association is Rob Roumiguere.

The county is relatively friendly to farmers, unlike the growing hostility in Napa and Sonoma as newcomers and some long-time residents fight burgeoning vineyards.

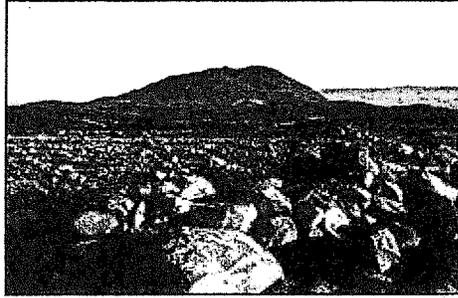
Shannon Gunier says the county has learned from the other areas, so it focuses on education and advice for erosion control rather than excessive bureaucracy. UC Farm Advisor Glenn McGourty notes that growers can pick good sites far from neighbors to plant vines. Some lie in isolated areas that weren't practical to farm with mules and horses 100 years ago. "There are hundreds of places in Lake County that can grow great grapes," he claims, predicting, "As the industry matures, we're going to have many exciting adventures in quality and taste." He adds, "There's a lot of vision and money creating vineyards in Lake County."



The Physical Layout

Lake County is named, of course, for Clear Lake, the largest natural lake in California. Though relatively shallow, it has significant impact by moderating temperatures in nearby areas.

The lake lies at the feet of Mount Konocti, a dramatic dormant volcano that reminds some of Mount Vesuvius near Naples. The county, but particularly this area, is the region where the Continental overthrust meets the Pacific plate, the reason for high volcanic activity. Konocti and numerous other nearby volcanic peaks have had significant impact on nearby soil, covering it with light tephra, and peppering it with black glass-like obsidian and semi-precious "Lake County diamonds," brilliant quartz crystals.



Most of Lake County lies above 1000 ft., the Lake is at 1300 ft. and most of the grape growing areas lie above that elevation, some as high as 2400 ft. UC Farm Advisor McGourty notes that the area has a continental climate, unlike that of nearby counties that experience greater marine influence. "Fog is very rare," he notes and mildew is less of a problem than in the rest of the North Coast. This results in a shorter growing season, too.

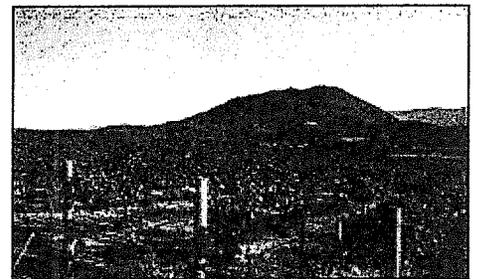
The area can be very hot in the summer, but it has many higher cool areas. More significantly, it has very cool nights that help maintain acidity; a 40-degree diurnal swing is common.

Varied Growing Areas

In addition to being a part of the North Coast AVA, Lake County contains two smaller AVAs: Clear Lake and Guenoc Valley. The former naturally encompasses a large area around the Lake, particularly its western and southwestern areas where many of the county's vines are planted. The Guenoc AVA in the southeastern corner of the county is a story unto itself (see sidebar).

The major grape growing areas other than Guenoc Valley have been Big Valley, the low-lying area along the Lake between Mount Konocti and Lakeport, and the highlands plateau and hills west of Highway 29. The county's primary grape crop has been Chardonnay grapes, most from the low Big Valley area.

Grapes from these rich valley vineyards provide the county's volume because of their rich flavors, which are desired by Kendall-Jackson and other wineries for blending in their most popular wines. Ironically, Lake County is probably an even better place to grow sauvignon blanc, and its low vineyard costs provide an alternative to growers who can't justify planting sauvignon blanc in areas like upper Napa Valley where cabernet sauvignon returns much higher revenue.



Red Hills for Red Wines

More recently, there has been increasing excitement about new hillside vineyards in the Red Hills/Amber Knolls area due west of the mountain. The name comes from the red soil, which contains a high portion of iron and other minerals ideal for making good red wines. Growers believe the hillside locations will produce wines that will put Lake County on the map.

The modern pioneer in Lake County grape growing was Bob Roumiguere, who first planted a small vineyard in the early '70s. Eventually, he acquired 600 acres, and his sons Rob and John manage his vineyards and the company's business.

In addition to demonstrating the quality of grapes possible in the area, Roumiguere has also been a tireless worker in both the local grape growers association and the Lake County Winegrape Commission, demonstrating considerable political savvy and leadership. He just retired as Commission president after eight years and counts among the group's major accomplishments getting the county included in the North Coast AVA, a masterful gerrymander considering its lack of coastal influence.

Joining Roumiguere recently here have been Kendall-Jackson and Beckstoffer Vineyards. Not far away in the Snow Lake area, George Myers is undertaking ambitious planting.

The Promising Red Hills

The Roumiguieres have vineyards in both the Highlands and Big Valley, and recently began developing a plot in the Red Hills area. Here, they've planted 135 acres of the 210-acre former walnut orchard, dealing with abrasive volcanic soil that can wear out ripper points in a day and require jackhammers to dig planting holes. It's not clear whether it was Mount Konocti or nearby Mount Hannah, Cobb Mountain or even Mount St. Helena that accounted for the soils; there were seven volcanic vents in the area.

Next to the Roumiguere's plot lies the new 462-acre Amber Knolls Vineyard of Beckstoffer Vineyards. The location consists of rolling hills that look more like sand dunes than the usual California creek valleys and rugged hills. Rather than coursing down the hills, water here simply percolates into the soil.

The deep red volcanic soils are very deep and uniform, but layered with the almost impenetrable obsidian. General Manager Frank Anderson says removing the rocks was a massive undertaking and they don't till the soils because of the rocks. Native Americans chipped the stones to make razor-sharp arrowheads and knives, and workers today endure frequent flat tires from the sharp shards.

The property, like Roumiguere's, lies at 1800 to 2400 feet, and there is significant temperature difference between the top and bottom of the hills. It generally receives cooling breezes, even in hot weather, yet is above the frost line and doesn't need frost protection. Anderson says the company believes that site can produce exceptional cabernet. "We intend to produce fruit worthy of vineyard designation," he vows.

Near the Red Hills, which lie just off Highway 29, is Snow Lake Vineyard, a 2500-acre ranch assembled by president George Myers. He formerly grew grapes in Clarksburg. About 100 acres will be developed, and Myers is leaving the southern half in natural habitat as well as providing wildlife corridors through the vineyards.

The hilly property formerly contained seven abandoned walnut orchards, which had been largely cleared when Myers acquired it; the shallow soil doesn't support orchards well but is excellent for grapes preferring lean soil. It receives about 50 inches of rain annually and lies above 2000 ft.

One part of the property was once owned by Louis M. Martini Winery and was the source of its famed Barbera.

Myers says the topsoil in the area had largely washed away because of disking, but after digging 200 pits, they've mapped 13 soil types on the property. The ranch makes extensive use of technology like GIS to plan its plantings.

Myers is trying assorted rootstocks and planting mainly cabernet sauvignon because of demand, and because it does so well on the site. He's also planted merlot, petite verdot, syrah, barbera and has high hopes for syrah, which he suspects will do especially well at the site.

Myers likes being distant from other vineyards, which he hopes will help reduce pests. He believes the site could be farmed organically, but it's difficult to establish the vineyards that way. "The weeds are bad for the first few years." He adds, "There's not much call for organic grapes from the wineries, anyway."

Unlike Myers, Ron Bertolucci and his family have been long-time farmers in Lake County. He has four ranches, one consisting of 53 organically farmed acres (out of a total of 64 acres), growing chardonnay, muscat canelli (to add nuances to other varieties) and viognier. A great believer in analyzing soils to determine limiting factors, he uses green manure and composted pomace to restore fertility in the Big Valley vineyard. To encourage beneficial insects, he plants cover crops

that produce nectar at different times, and he also encourages a varied habitat around the vineyard.

Bartolucci also owns two mountainous vineyards where he's found organic farming impractical. He finds that white grapes grow best on the bigger valley floor soil, which allows it to express its own characteristics, while the reverse is true for reds—they excel in poor soil with a considerable percentage of rock, clay and volcanic material that the vine can extract from the site.

Wildhurst Vineyards is a partnership headed by long-time grower Myron Holdenried, who established the vineyard in 1991. He has also established a winery of the same name, which draws on the 250 acres of vineyards to make the popular varietals, but its Sauvignon Blanc is the flagship wine. It operates a friendly tasting room in downtown Kelseyville.

Undoubtedly, Lake County's best known and most respected winemaker is Jed Steele, who crafts wines that have helped establish the County's reputation. Selling all the wine he can make, Steele avoids the usual winery marketing efforts. Though his grape suppliers and even competitors wish otherwise, his tasting room in Kelseyville is infamous locally for often being closed.

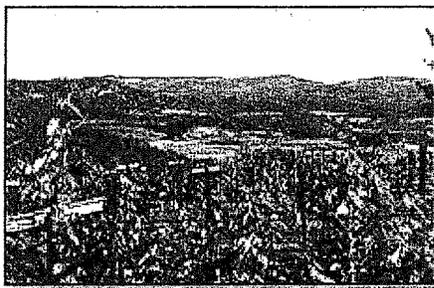
Steele's winemaker, Dave Crippen, recently launched his own brand named after his wife Susan's father, J.J. McHale.

Ployez Winery was established by Gerald Ployez, a third-generation winemaker from France's Champagne region. Not yet growing grapes on its 53 acres, it produces sparkling wine from purchased fruit. It has a tasting room near Lower Lake open to the public.

Two smaller wineries near Middletown are Horne Winery and Vineyards and Abbott Winery. One interesting development in Lake County is a spillover from Napa and Sonoma of individuals wanting to establish small wineries to live the "wine country life style," either on weekends or in retirement. Attracted by the much lower costs, many Silicon Valley and city folk are buying land, and local real estate agents are fanning the fervor.

Sidebar Article

Guenoc, A World of Its Own



Guenoc Winery and Langtry Estates is a world unto itself. Like Chalone in Monterey County, it's well known for its excellent wines, but has rarely been identified with Lake County.

It's no wonder. The 23,000-acre property dwarfs any other vineyard property in the Coastal Region, and more than 2000 acres lie in better known and more lucrative Napa County. Part of the property lies in the Guenoc Valley AVA, one of few single-proprietor AVAs in

America.

Vineyards in the area were planted in the 1850's--an ancient syrah vine planted in 1854 still produces fruit--but it was best known when controversial British entertainer Lillie Langtry bought it in 1888, intending to make wines as fine as those in Bordeaux. Her house, a hunting lodge turned into a B&B, still stands on the property not far from that of her paramour, and is open to the public.

In spite of her efforts, Lillie's wines were never a commercial success, and she moved on in 1906.

The modern era of Guenoc began in the '60s when the Magoon family--descended from Hawaiian and Chinese royalty--traded the University of Hawaii 21 acres of land in Hawaii for 24,000 acres in Lake County. Owner Orville Magoon has since donated 1000 acres to build a college on the property.

Though the property was originally a stock farm, the Magoon family planted vines in Guenoc Valley in 1969, then added more acreage and built a modern winery. It now has plantings on its Napa Valley land, and most recently, Orville Magoon has planted vines on the steep tephra ridges high above the valley where pioneers first planted vines.

Magoon, a world-famous coastal engineer, is a tireless experimenter and innovator, and his wife, former opera singer Karen Melander-Magoon, has been bitten by the same bug. The vineyard already contained the other seven varieties traditional in Bordeaux (even the obscure st. macaire and gros verdot), but Karen embarked on a quest in 1990 to legally import carmenere. The grape is now little grown in Bordeaux, but it was a mainstay before phylloxera wiped out the vines. It now prospers in Chile, where it contributes to the lush flavors of Chilean "Merlot."

This year, Guenoc harvested a small quantity of Carmenere, and is now probably the only winery in the world making a Bordeaux blend with all eight varieties. It has even provided budstock to Vinifera to make the variety available to other growers.

That aside, Guenoc has 400 acres planted and produces some top rated wines, though often with fruit grown elsewhere. Magoon believes, however, that his new mountain vineyards can produce world-class wine from their pyroclastic tephra soils, which were blown through the air like popcorn when the volcano exploded. It's neutral, infertile and drains well, ideal for cabernet grapes, he believes. "My goal is to get a 100 in the Wine Spectator," he vows, and those who know him know that if he doesn't, it won't be for lack of trying.

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As Napa vineyard land continues to spiral upward, growers here are looking for alternatives. Just over the hill in Lake County, Napa growers are beginning to see a good opportunity with land prices still affordable.

Beckstoffer Vineyards, George Myers and Beringer Wine Estates, just to name a few, have invested millions of dollars on Lake County, still somewhat unproven as an ultra-premium winegrowing region.

Beckstoffer Vineyards, one of the North Coast's most successful grape growers, planted 600 acres of cabernet sauvignon in Lake County in 1997, while Beringer Wine Estates and Sonoma's Kendall-Jackson wineries have invested a significant amount of time and money into vineyards in this least known county of the North Coast region.

John Brown, vice president of Beckstoffer Vineyards, said the company plans on developing between 110 to 140 acres per year in Lake County over the next several years. "We're in the Red Hills area, and we're growing primarily cabernet sauvignon. Our first production was last year, so we're pretty early into it.

"Everybody seems excited about the quality of the fruit. It has definitely met or exceeded our expectations," Brown added.

Beckstoffer Vineyards, which garners some of the highest prices in California for grapes grown in Napa and Mendocino counties, is betting on Lake County to produce the kind of fruit to which their clients have become accustomed.

After a year of searching the North Coast for new vineyard land, the company chose Lake County. "We like the soil and climate there," said Andy Beckstoffer, chairman of Beckstoffer Vineyards. "We think we found a special place."

Beckstoffer has planted in the Red Hills area, red volcanic mountains in the south end of Lake County. There, warm days rapidly turn to cold nights, allowing grapes to hang on the vine longer. Growers there don't usually begin harvest before October.

Six counties make up the North Coast AVA: Napa, Sonoma, Mendocino, Solano, Marin and Lake, all bearing the North Coast pedigree, which can buoy grape prices well above \$4,000 a ton. Lake County, certainly the lesser known, has seen more and more interest by grape growers in recent years and now several new wineries are slated to be built there.

There were 33 bonded wineries in Lake County prior to Prohibition in 1919, including one owned by entertainer Lilly Langtry. The Guenoc Winery (which also produces the Langtry brand) is on the site of Langtry's former estate.

Since the repeal of Prohibition, Lake County's fame has been slow to rebuild. Most of the grapes grown here have historically gone into wines made by producers in Napa and Mendocino counties, who have not always given the Lake County grape source its due on the label.

But today, Lake County is in a renaissance. Vineyard acreage is steadily increasing and wineries are beginning to pop up. In 1991 there were only 90 acres of grapes, but by 1999 total acreage jumped to 5,500 acres, according to the Lake County Agriculture Department. In 2000, Lake County vineyard acres grew by nearly a 1,000 acres, and so far this year 401 acres are either planted or in the approval process.

"Lake County is kind of the last frontier," said Dan Obermyer, Lake County community development director. "What we're seeing are winegrowers coming over the hill from Napa and Sonoma to grow ultra-premium grapes where the land is still affordable."

He said that while there is a thorough review process done by the county's Erosion Prevention Education Committee, the county is trying to streamline the permit process.

"The land is still cheap and the county is user-friendly. We've had our struggles, but we're starting to attract some high-quality growers," said Shannon Gunier, executive director for the Lake County Winegrape Commission.

"From our point of view, we don't see it slowing down. There's still a lot of interest in the development of vineyards here and there's still land available," Obermyer said.

As demand for Lake County vineyard land continues to rise, so do land prices. Prices spiked from an average of \$5,000 to \$6,000 per acre in 2000 to more than \$10,000 per acre today, according to Jim Westridge of Neft and Neft Realtors in Middletown.

He said that not only is vineyard development going on in the Red Hills, where growers are discussing the formation of a Red Hills appellation, but in Middletown and Clearlake Oaks areas as well.

Demand for vineyard land is high: "We're selling everything we can get our hands on," Westridge said. "We sold a 172-acre ranch for \$600,000 last May and it is reselling today for \$900,000."

Even though Lake County vineyard values are rising, there are still bargains to be had when compared to Napa Valley vineyard prices, which are averaging between \$75,000 to \$180,000 an acre depending on their location, according to Lindsay Wurlitzer, regional vice president with American AgCredit. Sonoma County vineyard land is also selling for \$75,000 per acre and up.

While vineyard acreage has steadily increased over the past five years, Lake County's winemaking industry has not seen the same expansion, until recently. Four new wineries are in the works from Middletown to Clearlake Oaks.

In Middletown, a winery is slated to be built on the Diamond D Ranch. Owner Paul Browning and winemaker Mark Fazi plan to produce 10,000 cases of ultra-premium red wines. John Monte Lago, a San Francisco financial consultant, has built a winery 2,000 feet high, overlooking Clear Lake. Monte Lago is also aiming at the ultra-premium market.

The Blackrock Winery and caves is another project in the planning stage. And Jim Fetzer, having sold his large MacNab Ranch vineyard near Hopland, bought 170 acres with a mile of lake frontage near Nice on the north shore of Clear Lake, where he's establishing a vineyard. It will be called Ceago del Lago.

Wine & Business

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July 2002

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Andy Beckstoffer

By Cyril Penn

For three decades, **Andy Beckstoffer** has influenced viticulture throughout Northern California. As the largest independent family-owned vineyard company on the North Coast, **Beckstoffer Vineyards** farms more than 1,000 acres in Napa Valley, 1,138 acres in Mendocino and more than 1,100 acres in Lake County. Andy Beckstoffer was instrumental in forming the **Napa Valley Grape Growers Association (NVGGA)** in 1976 and was an early advocate of the then-radical concept of tying the price of grapes to the retail price of finished wine. He was a major influence in the creation of the Napa County Winery Definition Ordinance (after years of trying to define what constituted a winery, NVGGA recommended their own definition—a required 75 percent of the wine made in the Napa Valley Agricultural Preserve would need to be from Napa Valley Grapes). Beckstoffer was among the first to introduce practices that have revolutionized grape growing: the use of overhead sprinkler systems for frost protection, innovations in trellising and vine spacing, and the use of drip irrigation. Beckstoffer continues to play a role in an ongoing revolution in vineyard management. *Wine Business Monthly* recently interviewed Andy Beckstoffer and excerpts of that interview follow:



Wine Business Monthly: How many wineries do you sell grapes to and what do you look for in a winery partner?

Andy Beckstoffer: We sell to 54 this year. We look at two things. We look at the ability of the winery to produce good wine. They also need to be able to market it. We want to tie the price of the grapes to the price of wine. If you have a winery that knows how to make wine but doesn't know how to price it effectively and market it, we're left in the cold as they are. If you have somebody who can't make good wine, it's not going to help to market it at a better price.

We're looking for somebody who can make and market wine and for somebody we can deal with and communicate with. In most of these things where we sell the best grapes, we go through about a two-year courtship where we are not only looking at the grapes and the wine that comes from it, but also at seeing how we deal together; if there's something going on in terms of the vineyard and how we can help them; and how they want to interact with us in the vineyard. We want to see if we can set up a long-term relationship because that's what we're really trying to do. We need to establish the relationship over a period of time so the winemakers know what they're working with.

WBM: You use a bottle price formula for selling grapes.

AB: We are tying the price of grapes to the bottle of wine. We've done significant research over a period of time. The price of grapes has generally been 26 percent of the winery's FOB price, so if you take 26 percent times the cases per ton that a winery gets—which will run between 60 and 70 cases per ton times their FOB price, you will

find it is approximately 100 times the retail price. We're going after that from the point of view of historical relationships.

What's really happened that is so surprising and interesting over the past couple of years is that the price of wine has gone up so significantly and people talk about the price of grapes. Really the price of grapes is tied to the price of wine, with the growers hopefully getting a fair share. If you look at those numbers, and we've tried to tie this to historic numbers in a rapidly changing environment, you'll find that those numbers will net the winery a gross profit in the 50 to 60 percent range, which is their historic gross profit.

I could show you numbers and you could work it on back; you'll find that the return in today's investment for the winery and grower is roughly the same. The winery makes probably twice as much investment as the grower does for a dollar of wine revenue and gets twice as much return. But if you'll assume that the agricultural risk is equal to the marketing risk, the risks are the same, and so the return should be the same.

So the whole bottle price thing, where lots of people talk about it at just 100 times the retail price, is really tied to some historical parameters: both the percentage of grape costs in the FOB, the gross profit for the winery, and return-on-investment numbers.

WBM: Are other growers adopting that way of pricing grapes?

AB: I think a lot of growers are adopting the procedure where the grapes are tied to the market price of the wine. I think most growers in Napa Valley, if they were approached by a winery to buy some fruit, would ask the winery: "What's the price of the bottle that my grapes are going into?" In the past, somebody would have said, "What's was the average market price last year?," which is the commodity index. Rather than doing that, people are now focusing on the price of the bottle of wine. If somebody comes to you and you have Napa Valley Cabernet and they say they want to put it in a \$15 bottle of wine, you know they simply can't do it.

Going beyond that, there are people beginning to use distinct formulas. Generally speaking, I think we have changed the way business is done, particularly in the Napa Valley. The conversation between buyer and seller relates to the value of the end product rather than the commodity index or the district average price for grapes.

WBM: What's the mix of long and short-term contracts?

AB: We try to sell about 80 percent of our grapes on long-term contracts because if you don't have any grapes to sell, nobody talks to you, plus you don't have any opportunity to take advantage of the new star that rises. In terms of the long-term contracts, we do three, five and ten year contracts. But depending on the comfort level of the winery and us, we certainly want to do an evergreen so that if somebody shows up with a bad hair day, we don't bust up this relationship that's budding. The more important thing than the actual term is to have some sort of evergreen period where you can work out a difference that might have developed.

WBM: Do you think growers are becoming better businessmen than they used to be?

AB: Absolutely. If you look over the past 30 years, you will find growers much better businessmen. If you look at the 1990s, and back into the 1980s, there's one thing that's a shame from my point of view. That is, some of the growers who owned the land in the 1950s and 1960s, who were good farmers then, and are good farmers now, don't own their land. They don't own their land because they were bad businessmen back in the 1970s and 1980s. I think the growers are beginning to understand the economics of a bottle of wine, which I don't think they had any understanding of before. The conversation about bottle prices forces them to understand.

Generally speaking, the information available to us through your magazine and others is so much better today. It allows the grower to be a better businessman and I think he begins to understand that while some people find it distasteful for some reason, they know that if they're not good businessmen, their families are going to lose their land.

WBM: What's your view of the wine market post September 11?

AB: Up until maybe a month ago, all the winery buyers were just sitting on their hands not doing anything. All the

wineries were looking six months back rather than two years forward. Now we're finding that in the Napa Valley, more than anywhere else, everybody wants to talk. And the good grapes, to the extent they are available, are getting contracted up. We are writing contracts as we speak. In Mendocino and in Lake County, there are still people looking a bit back.

Ten or twelve wineries have told me their February 2002 was better than their February 2001 and their March was looking better. I think this idea of looking back rather than forward is fast going away. What ramifications that will have for pricing I don't know.

My understanding is that the big problem is the bulk wine business. That's all vintage-dated wine. It can't sit around for very long. The wineries have to address that problem and whether its going to last six months or a year, I don't know. I suspect that by this time next year it will all be gone. Demand continues to grow for the wines we sell in double digits. That will eat up the problem.

WBM: So you think we'll resolve the issues in the bulk wine market?

AB: They just have to be resolved. You can't sell 2001 Chardonnay in 2004. It's just old wine: It won't sell. They've got to address that problem. They need to open the wound and then close it. What are they going to do? There can be some pain between here and there for us growers and some vintners, but I think it's going to be relatively shortterm. We've had these cycles. I remember 1974, 1983, and 1991, and now this again. The business is still a cyclical business but I would look in this cycle for the depth of the downturn to be less and the length of it to be less, too. We'll get out of this fine.

WBM: What do you do in the vineyard with respect to sustainability and how has that changed over the years?

AB: We've finally gotten a word that communicates a lot of things we're trying to do. Sustainability is certainly environmental sensitivity but it's also economic feasibility and social responsibility. We need to consider all those things and become more socially conscious. That's about sustainability. If we don't communicate better and be responsible, we're not going to sustain our businesses.

It's the same thing with the economics of sustainability. It all has to do with tying the price of grapes to the price of wine. Pricing is much more stable if you do it that way. It doesn't change the direction it's going to go, but it does make it much more predictable, and the curves get a little more flat, so you don't have these wide swings.

In terms of environmental sensitivity, we have some land in Mendocino County that's organic and we use that as a laboratory to see what it's like if you go all the way.

Today, we design our vineyard blocks for quality and efficiency and sanitation. The wind will blow up the roads and clean up the bugs. We use cover crops to try to grow the good bugs that eat the bad bugs. We've cut way down on any sort of toxins we use. We pull leaves and let air and light solve the problems that the toxins would have. People don't give us in the North Coast enough credit, but drip irrigation is probably the greatest water conservation measure that has ever hit agriculture in California and it's very expensive but we all use it today. We've got machines that will pick and pluck and do all the things we used to do with toxins. We now don't just spray every period, if you could, every ten or twelve days. We look at counts to see how many bugs are developing. It is really just a mindset of the things you do everyday. It used to be that farmers loved to drive tractors. They would drive over their ground and they were just beating the hell out of the soil. We don't do that anymore. We do silt fences and hay bails and everything else to conserve our soil whenever we do anything. I think its just what we do every day, as well as some of the very big things in terms of our viticulture regimes and equipment.

WBM: The situation with the Sierra Club and Napa County has reached a level of crisis.

AB: I think that's true. Most farmers think of themselves as environmentalists. For myself, I would say in almost all cases, I don't have any disagreement with their goals. It's the tactics that are a problem. For example, this timber initiative in Napa County sounds very Draconian. I think it's a radical element within the Sierra Club that has gone to an initiative and in the initiative process nobody gets to talk about it anymore. I think there's a clear radical element in Napa County on the environmental side.

I think they are beginning to be recognized as fringe elements rather than the mainstream. It's going to take a little time and a little pain to get that sorted out and get them defined as radical elements rather than the mainstream of the Sierra Club.

It's not just Napa County. There were 19 projects tied up in Lake County and now they are beginning to let those things through, as people get more reasonable.

This is a tough conversation because we don't want to speak ill of environmental interests. We feel like we're part of that but when they get radical, you wait as long as you can and something needs to happen about it.

Interview continued below after "The Growth of Beckstoffer Vineyards" sidebar.

The Growth of Beckstoffer Vineyards

1966 Andy Beckstoffer graduates with an M.B.A. degree from **Amos Tuck School of Business, Dartmouth College**, and joins **Heublein, Inc.**, becoming director of corporate acquisitions strategies in 1967. He recommends that Heublein enter the super-premium wine segment of the California wine industry.

1968 Heublein buys **United Vintners, Inc.**, owners of **Inglenook** and **Italian Swiss Colony** wines, based on Beckstoffer's analysis.

1969 Beckstoffer negotiates Heublein's purchase of **Beaulieu Vineyards**, and moves his family to California.

1970 Beckstoffer establishes **Vinifera Development Corporation**, working with **André Tchelistcheff** of Beaulieu Vineyard and other viticulturalists. He oversees vineyard management, learns the art and science of grapegrowing, and pioneers business and viticulture techniques to improve grapegrowing economics, grape quality, and yield.

1971 Beckstoffer installs first drip irrigation in Napa Valley.

1973 Beckstoffer purchases 75 percent of Vinifera Development Corporation from Heublein and renames it **Vinifera Vineyards**. This purchase includes Melrose Ranch in St. Helena and vineyard acreage in Mendocino County.

1974 Beckstoffer acquires controlling interest in 487-acre Vinifera Vineyard in Ukiah (former grounds of Mendocino State Hospital). He incorporates Vinifera's custom farming operations as the Napa Valley Vineyard Company (later Winegrower Farming Company), and Mendocino Vineyard Company.

1975 **Napa Valley Grape Growers Association (NVGGA)** is formed with Beckstoffer as a founding director. Beckstoffer seeks to empower the grapegrower, stressing mutual interests of growers and wineries. Beckstoffer purchases 12 vineyard acres in Napa Valley.

1976 Beckstoffer is elected president of NVGGA, which forges agreements with wineries to accept the bottle price formula, tying the grape prices to the retail bottle price of the wine.

1978 Vinifera is downsized and financially restructured and renamed **Beckstoffer Vineyards**, under Beckstoffer's full ownership. Beckstoffer purchases 44 vineyard acres in Carneros, Napa Valley.

1981 Beckstoffer purchases 51 vineyard acres in Mendocino County (Sanford Vineyard).

1982 Beckstoffer purchases 70 vineyard acres in Mendocino County. (Beckstoffer Vineyard No. III)

1983 Beckstoffer purchases 25 vineyard acres in Napa Valley (Beckstoffer Vineyard No. IV), and 128 vineyard acres in Mendocino County (Beckstoffer Russian River Vineyard).

1988 Beckstoffer purchases the former Beaulieu Vineyard No. 3, 172 acres in Napa Valley.

1989 Beckstoffer leads NVGGA in obtaining the *Definition of a Napa Valley Winery* that requires 75 percent use of Napa Valley grapes and allows food service and education at Napa Valley wineries. Beckstoffer purchases 44 vineyard acres in Rutherford, Napa Valley (Beckstoffer Vineyard No. VI).

1992 Beckstoffer purchases 196 vineyard acres in Carneros, Napa Valley (Carneros Lake Vineyard).

1993 Beckstoffer purchases two major Napa Valley vineyards: 139-acre Las Amigas Vineyard in Carneros, and 89 acres of the historic former Beaulieu Vineyard No. 4 and To Kalon Vineyard.

1996 Beckstoffer purchases 45 vineyard acres in Napa Valley (Vineyard X).

1997 Beckstoffer Vineyards is honored by the State of California as an Integrated Pest Management Innovator. Beckstoffer purchases three vineyard properties totaling 564 acres: 80-acre Orchard Avenue Vineyard in Napa Valley, and 25 acres of the historic Dr. George Belden Crane Vineyard; 632 acres of land in Lake County (Amber Knolls Vineyard).

1998 Beckstoffer purchases 84 acres in Lake County (Red Hills Vineyard), and 171 acres in Mendocino County (Mendocino 101 Vineyard).

1999 Beckstoffer purchases 400 acres in Lake County (Crimson Ridge Vineyard).

2001 Beckstoffer purchases 92 acres in Mendocino County (Talmage Pond Ranch).

2002 Beckstoffer purchases 32 acres in Rutherford, Napa Valley (Danforth Vineyard). **wbm**

[Click here to view "Aquisitions of Beckstoffer Vineyards" sidebar.](#)

WBM: Technology has improved grape quality. What's the latest and greatest?

AB: You look at the 1970s and 1980s and we all did exactly what we did before although we were learning. And then phylloxera came and gave us a chance to redo everything new.

The technology that's still going on: drip irrigation, and bench grafts, these things didn't exist in the 1970s. Quality has come through increased technology. We're now at a point where the new technology is things like (Global Positioning Systems), and the visual mapping we can do.

While that's the new technology, I think technology has probably gotten beyond our ability to manage with it right now. We're trying to find out how to manage with it. For example, our new Lake County development is sort of a ruffled blanket with rolling hills, so we get different exposures, a Southern exposure and a Northern exposure and a Northeast exposure, etcetera. We can graph that with colors. If you were a winemaker and you picked a particular block and it had a southeast exposure and you really liked that, I could go all through this vineyard, which is almost 1,000 acres, and pick the southeast exposures for you.

We have technologies that allow us to map grape maturities during harvest time. The newest and best things coming into the vineyards right now are information technologies. We are getting some really good pre-pruning machines. Vineyard materials are getting better. The technology that is best right now is giving us information so we can apply the technologies we learned in the 1970s and 1980s.

WBM: What are you trying to figure out in the vineyard?

AB: We need to improve our quality and our yields at the same time. The price of land, in Napa County has gone through the ceiling. We need to make the land more productive from an economic point of view. That's either higher prices or more grapes or a combination of one of the two.

We need to preserve that land. We can't do it unless we can make the land the highest and best use of the land versus urbanization and things like that. The only way to do it is to increase the revenues on the land. Prices are going up because they are tied to these high-priced wines and that relates to quality, but with the closer vine

spacing we need to find out: what is that acceptable range of yields that will give us this higher but acceptable range of quality. That's the tough thing.

WBM: You are active in three major regions. Have you thought about Sonoma, The Central Coast or Washington State?

AB: We've thought about all of the above over the years. We're a regional grower. The economic system that is the North Coast where you have multiple wineries and multiple growers dealing in total quality, is different than it is in any of the other areas. Plus, we grow red grapes best. When you have six buyers and 100 sellers, it's just a different system than you have here. Plus, if you have an area that is oriented toward the quantity of production rather than the quality or production, it's a totally different system.

We only deal in the quality areas and where our people can be home at night. We have always been managers and not investors, so that if I go anywhere outside of the North Coast, I become to a certain extent an investor because it's so difficult to get there.

Also, we want to deal in an area where we can grow red grapes. Red grapes are made much more in the vineyard than a white wine would be. If you're going to be an independent grower, you want to work with something where the major determinant of quality and price is done...rather than having someone else able to structure it or take anything and change it in the winery. Plus, we're still relatively small and don't have resources to do everything.

WBM: Cabernet and Merlot are your key varietals.

AB: Our whole development in Lake County is Cabernet. It's a new vineyard operation. This will produce a North Coast Cabernet, which is roughly a \$20 bottle of wine. If we can do that, we can open up Lake County and make Lake County wine country just like Napa, Sonoma and Mendocino. It's a pioneering effort up there.

Our major effort in Napa is single-site luxury premium Cabernets. Lake County is the most exciting new thing in that there is a volume of North Coast quality Cabernet becoming available in special spots. We've exported everything we've learned in Napa to Lake County in terms of technology.

One of the most exciting things is the cool climate Merlot in Napa. What we are doing in Carneros with Merlot is very exciting. That district, and hopefully we will be part of that, can produce the first really great Merlot ever produced in the New World. I think most wine writers would say we really haven't produced great Merlot. You get one here and there. But a district, as such, to be a Merlot district--it seems like it's going to be cooler than we thought before. We don't plant Merlot much in Rutherford anymore. We plant it all in Carneros.

WBM: What about Zinfandel, Syrah and Pinot Noir?

AB: If you look at the Central Coast, they probably do Syrah better than we do. So why plant Syrah if you have Cabernet ground? It's the same thing with Zinfandel. If you're planting grapes on a piece of land that cost \$150,000 per acre, it's very hard to plant Syrah or Zinfandel.

If you can grow the best Pinot in the world, you could probably plant Pinot. But it's not determined yet where that grows. I think it's very clear that the Cabernet grows in Napa County and I think we're showing that the Merlot is going to grow in Carneros. But the Pinot might grow several places and I don't know where that is. We have some Pinot in Carneros, but again if you look at bottle prices, if you tie the price of grapes to the price of wine and the price of wine isn't very high, you're not going to get a high price for the grapes. Pinot Noir is a very difficult grape to grow, and it's another one where the vines seem to need some age. We have some Pinot Noir in Carneros planted in the 1960s that's excellent, but it's a long time to wait.

WBM: Have you thought about your own label?

AB: We are very happy and proud to be growers. One of the reasons we're successful is to have a single focus of growing the best grapes. My vineyard managers are the number one guys in the organization. They don't play second fiddle to a winemaker, which happens a lot of times in a winery/ vineyard operation.

Being in the wine business is not a logical extension of being in the grape business from a management point of view. We are in the business of farming. They [wineries] are in the business of manufacturing, and in a very big way are in consumer marketing. We're not in any of those. There are also a lot of good business reasons why we won't do our own brand. Mainly it's because we like what we're doing.

When we buy a piece of land (and let's just say it's very good) we can sell those grapes to ten different winemakers and each of them can make 3,000 cases of cult wine. If we had one, we could still only sell 3,000 cases and the rest of it would have to be blended off somewhere. This way, we have a greater opportunity to show what we have and present the consumer with a much better array of wines while maintaining ourselves as growers. And with the vineyard designates, we get all the credit we need.

WBM: Do you think Mendocino is underrated?

AB: I think Mendocino is greatly underrated for its Chardonnay. I remember back in 1980 when the Simi winery started buying our stuff and the Reserve Chardonnay Mendocino County won awards, and then they stopped doing it because they wanted to be a Sonoma winery.

The problem with Mendocino is not enough quality wineries up there wanting to sell the Mendocino product. But the Chardonnay has been just excellent for a long, long period of time.

It's more difficult to find good red grape ground up in Mendocino County but some of those benches are just wonderful. Yes, its underrated. It's very greatly underrated.

WBM: Last year we were hearing all about the glassy-winged sharpshooter and this year I haven't heard that much. Does the glassy-winged sharpshooter scare you?

AB: That's the scariest comment I've heard in a long time. I was in Sacramento the day before yesterday. We're trying to ensure that we have the funds to continue our work. One of the things we're really concerned about is people do think that the glassy-winged sharpshooter was yesterday's problem and it absolutely is not. We're getting the funding because it is such a serious problem. If people begin to think it was yesterday's problem, we won't get that funding and that would be awful.

The thing that we have to do is stop the spread. We have no cure for Pierce's disease and we're going to find a cure but that has to be down the road. In Napa County for example, there are lots of government protections because we are an 'uninfected' county. The government protects the uninfected counties from shipments from infected counties. If you find six bugs, six live adults in Napa County, we become an infected county and we lose all those protections. I think they've just found some egg masses in Sonoma County.

Believe me, from a disease point of view, it's the most serious problem I've seen in 30 years. The problem is as great this year as it was last, and it probably will be as great as it was last year for the next several years.

If this thing hits (the way it eats and the way it dispenses disease and with the fact that we have no cure for Pierce's disease) it could be an economic disaster in a very short period of time. I don't think that big business is going to go down. We'll find something to spray. But, between here and there, we'll have to use pesticides that neither we, or our neighbors, will want to use. And that will set up a battle with counties and good-minded people that we just don't want to fight. We don't want to use the pesticides and they don't want to use the pesticides. That's why it is so important that we set up all these detection devises so that they in fact don't get here. Once they get here, we'll have to do what we have to do to save our industry. And it won't be a very pleasant thing. It is not yesterday's problem.

WBM: Growers have been talking about physiological ripeness versus sugar levels, especially after the last harvest.

AB: We're looking for mature fruit rather than just ripe fruit. We now have a larger set of tools than we ever had before. We haven't abandoned any of the processes we had before. We still go in with refractometers and measure the sugar. We still go in and look at the berries and the vine and see if we are giving moisture to the wine or if we are pumping up berries.

We've added more art to it, that is in great part, science based. We now know that to get maturity in a grapevine probably one of the measures of that is the seeds turn brown. So we have people not only checking sugar and looking at berries, but we also have people looking at the seeds. We look at the vine and see the shape of the vine. All of our cultural practices generally are oriented to keeping that vine good and healthy rather than working with the fruit itself. The vine works with the fruit once we get the vine in the proper condition. We look at the vine more than we did before but also look at the fruit. We used to talk about micro-climates as being the difference between Carneros and Rutherford. Then we talked about micro-climates as the difference between your vineyard which was adjacent to mine, or a block. But now we're more concerned with the micro-climate of a bunch of grapes than we are about the vine.

We keep getting more and more refined about what we look at and it gets to be blending of the art-most of this art is scientifically based. A guy has been tasting grapes for ten years and now what does he taste? It's getting to be a science as well as an art.

WBM: How's the year's crop looking?

AB: We don't know. To this date, we seem to have avoided any major frosts. But in 1970 the big frost came in the middle of May. You're beginning to see bunches form.

We now understand that grape maturity, quality and quantity is a two-year system and really I'm talking more about the spring than anything else when the bud development happens. Last year's spring was a good one. So if we have a good spring this year, we could have a very bountiful harvest. We have one of them in the bag, if you will, and we are looking for the second one. On that basis, you'd have to say it's bright.

WBM: Can you offer advice for people who want to get into the business of growing grapes?

AB: Well a lot of people think it's over--that all the land is planted and everything's been set and developed, that the opportunity that we had in the 1970s has all gone away. I disagree with that 100 percent. I still think there are great opportunities for people to come in and take the new technology with new enthusiasm and create greater quality.

Given the place that Napa Valley is today with their wines, you have to ask. How do we raise it to the next highest level? I think that's with single-site expression, with grapes coming from a particular vineyard. Lots of the better wines are vineyard blends and they're called "Reserves." Tomorrow they will be vineyard designates coming from a specific site. That's a risky business because you can't blend off a problem. You can't solve a problem in the winery; you have to take what you are given. With the high risk comes the high return.

In the old days of the 'magic chef' where you would bring the grapes in and the winery would make everything wonderful. We were looking for the Ken and Barbie dolls of the wine world, that perfectly structured beautiful, everything-is-just-perfect, type of wine. I think the future is (and the analogy is the fit beauty with the chipped tooth who's charm is really in the way she carries her defects) where the wine shows the particular terroir or characteristics of a site and in doing that raises everything to a higher level. New people have the opportunity to take existing sites and bring the new technologies to them, and take new-found sites and take the new technologies to them.

WBM: Wouldn't you agree that the barriers to entry are higher than they were before?

AB: Sure they are, but when we came in the barriers looked awful high. It's just a question of whether you want to play at this level. We thought we were playing at the highest level when we were paying \$10,000 an acre for land in 1980. It looked awfully high then but if the price of wine and quality of wine can continue to increase and continue to be where it is, the whole system works. When we had \$15 wines, we had \$40,000 an acre ground. Now everything is to a much higher level. So yes, the barriers to entry are much higher, but the opportunity is still there.

WBM: How did you feel you were treated in the book *Napa* (written by James Conaway). Was it accurate?

AB: That is not a good book. It is, in my view, the most poorly researched and unbalanced presentation ever published. There are some circumstances that I recognize and actual events that happened in there but I don't recognize any of the motivations he has for me and lots of other people.

Yes we did come in the early 1970s and I came in with a corporation, which made me controversial anyway, being an outsider. But if you look at what was going on in the 1970s, there were six wineries and nobody was going anywhere. There had been next to no grapes planted for years. We were still growing grapes that were planted right after prohibition. If you look at how farm workers were treated; they were paid much less than minimum wage and they had absolutely no benefits. If you look at the housing situation, it was just awful compared to what it is today. The vineyards were all old and diseased and had the wrong varieties in the wrong places. In 1970, in the big frost, people burned tar in open buckets. People indiscriminately cut down signature oaks.

We came in and questioned a lot of things. The questions got misunderstood in the *Napa* book. We spent lots of money on farm worker housing. He never presents that side.

The idea he presents of **Robin Lail** being some nitwit running around listening to all the men in the valley, that's just not Robin Lail. On the issue of the winery definition ordinance, on which he spent a lot of time, he totally missed the point that the conflict was about corporate interests. It was the corporate interest versus the land interest. He sets it up as growers versus vintners, but it really wasn't that. Vintners felt as strongly about their land interests as we did, but because they were unwilling to speak up and back the grower position, they let the growers twist in the wind for three years. We would never have won if they had not come back and in the end supported us. He tries to make it this personal thing. Certainly on the fringe there were some personal feelings. But basically, it was a struggle between (corporate and land) interests.

WBM: He's working on another book. Did he call you?

AB: Yes and we didn't respond. I know we were controversial in terms of when we came in the valley with a corporation. I know that we were controversial when we demanded a voice for the independent growers. I know we were controversial when we spoke up for those land interests. But I never felt the disrespect that he talks about in there--the 'most hated man' in the valley, stuff like that. There was disrespect for the grower's position but that personal stuff he talks about I just don't recognize. To sell his book, he needed to create some good guys and some bad guys.

WBM: What's the vision for the future?

AB: I'm having a great time. Some people ask: "Are you going to retire?" I've spent 30 years trying to get people to listen, and now they're listening and I'm not going to shut up. You could ask: "What's worth a career?" I think a career is worth preserving this land in agriculture. We have to do that by making the land the highest and best use. Everyone has to understand that the ultimate enemy is going to be urbanization--not the environmentalists. We need to work together. Basically, we want to solidify gains in that area. Secondly, we have the real opportunity to consistently produce the best wines in the world. I think those wines are going to be Cabernet-based and they're going to come from the Napa Valley. I think that sort of cultural statement for our country would be something that a career is worth.

If you think about the United States; we have the biggest economy and the greatest armaments. Think about our cultural contributions, from jazz music to baseball to movies. Think if we also produced the greatest wine in the world. What statement would that make about our country? We in the Napa Valley have an opportunity to do that. So we want to continue to use the technology to better the quality and then present it to the world. If we make the best wine in the world, it's probably going to be made with vines that are now in the ground, with people who are on the ground. That's our challenge for the next ten years. **wbm**

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May 2002

grape grower: Andy Beckstoffer

Acquisitions of Beckstoffer Vineyards

NAPA COUNTY

Date	Vineyard	Acreage	Appellation	Variety
1973	Melrose	102 acres	Rutherford AVA	Chardonnay, Cabernet, Sauvignon Blanc, Merlot
1975	Beckstoffer Vineyard No. I	12 acres	Rutherford AVA	Cabernet Sauvignon
1976	Kusterer Vineyard (Vineyard Georges III)	30 acres	Rutherford AVA	Cabernet Sauvignon
1978	Carneros Creek	44 acres	Carneros AVA	Chardonnay
1983	Beckstoffer Vineyard No. IV	25 acres	St. Helena AVA	Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot
1988	Vineyard Georges III	172 acres	Rutherford AVA	Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot
1989	Beckstoffer Vineyard No VI (Vineyard Georges III)	44 acres	Rutherford AVA	Cabernet Sauvignon
1991	McCollum Ranch (Vineyard Georges III)	20 acres	Rutherford AVA	Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot
1992	Carneros Lake (Charles Krug)	196 acres	Carneros AVA	Chardonnay, Merlot, Pinot Noir
1993	Las Amigas	139 acres	Carneros AVA	Chardonnay, Merlot
1993	To Kalon	89 acres	Oakville AVA	Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Petite Verdot, Cabernet Franc
1996	Vineyard "X" (Vine Hill Vineyard)	45 acres	Oakville AVA	Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot
1997	Orchard Avenue	80 acres	Napa AVA	Merlot
1997	Dr. Crane	25 acres	St. Helena AVA	Cabernet Sauvignon, Petite Verdot, Cabernet Franc
2002	Danforth Vineyard (Vineyard Georges III)	32 acres	Rutherford AVA	Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Sauvignon Blanc

MENDOCINO COUNTY

Date	Vineyard	Acreage	Appellation	Variety
1973	Ukiah Ranch	137 acres	Ukiah	Cabernet Sauvignon, Zinfandel
1974	Vinifera Vineyard	487 acres	Ukiah	Cabernet, Merlot, Chardonnay, Gewurztraminer, Chenin Blanc, Viognier
1981	Sanford	51 acres	Ukiah	Sauvignon Blanc, Merlot
1982	Beckstoffer Vineyard No. III	70 acres	Ukiah	Chardonnay
1983	Beckstoffer Russian River	128 acres	Ukiah	Chardonnay, Cabernet Sauvignon
1998	Mendocino 101	171 acres	Ukiah	Chardonnay, Syrah, Cabernet Sauvignon, White Riesling

LAKE COUNTY

Date	Vineyard	Acreage	Appellation	Variety
1997	Amber Knolls	632 acres	Red Hills AVA	Cabernet Sauvignon
1998	Red Hills Vineyard	84 acres	Red Hills AVA	Cabernet Sauvignon
1999	Crimson Ridge Vineyard	400 acres	Red Hills AVA	Cabernet Sauvignon



Entrepreneurs

The appellation trail

Quentin Hardy, 09.16.02

Napa Valley has made the grape grower Andy Beckstoffer rich. Now he's betting his name--and fortune--on new soil.

A tough year in a hardscrabble market may be just the time to expand. Which is why William Andrew (Andy) Beckstoffer, the grand old man of the grape growers in Napa Valley, California, is spending \$25 million--and not on familiar soil. "We're Napa people, but the quality here is just so much better," says Beckstoffer, striding over his red-dirt and obsidian hillside in nearby Lake County. He hopes that his 400-hectare spread--50 kilometers and several income levels from the Napa border--will be the center of a new wine appellation, like Carneros in Napa or Margaux in France.

The expansion comes at a time of softening grape prices and a market worried about consumer demand. Beckstoffer, 62, calls it "the riskiest thing I've ever done." If it works, it could spark a boom in a region of pear orchards and bulk grapes--where the land goes for a twentieth the price of a Napa parcel just to the south. It will also lift the fortunes of Beckstoffer Family Vineyards, his holding company (2001 sales: \$26 million). Now Lake is "an economic ghetto," the grower says. "It will be wine country; fashionable."

Hard to believe, in a county with 4 wineries to Napa's 250 and with none of Napa's exclusive restaurants. But Beckstoffer figures that even if the market collapses, he can still supply the fruit for \$12 bottles--up to 500,000 cases a year by 2008, when his vines are fully producing--and still make a profit.

Beckstoffer came to Napa in 1969, a dicey time, with an M.B.A. from Dartmouth College's Tuck school. He worked in vineyard management for Heublein--he persuaded the company to get into winemaking--at the start of the region's explosion and the height of the grape boycotts. He has an empty Inglenook bottle signed by the labor leader Cesar Chavez; they drank the wine the night they settled years of labor disputes.

His first independent venture, in 1973, nearly buried him. Taking out an adjustable \$6 million loan that started at 7%, Beckstoffer got nailed by stagflation: Cabernet prices fell to \$400 a ton from \$800 in one year, and interest rates jumped (they peaked at 15%). Heublein, which still needed grapes, snatched back his land and kept him on as a contract farmer. It took him five years to clear the debt. Thanks to a boom in demand for high-quality U.S. wine and a buy-and-hold ethic for good land, Beckstoffer now owns 1,200 hectares, worth perhaps \$200 million, in Napa and Mendocino counties.

His secret for the Lake project isn't just finding land at \$25,000 a hectare (a hectare of land in Napa runs nearly \$500,000). Beckstoffer has figured out that a certain altitude--from about 600 to 730 meters--in the right part of Lake County has a heating-and-cooling cycle similar to Napa's. Find the right hill with access to water and it's a winner.

Good grapes are one thing. More than ever the wine business is about marketing; nowadays that starts with the growers. Beckstoffer and others have petitioned the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco & Firearms to designate their patches "the Red Hills District." The appellation sets the hills apart from the low-quality cabernet grown on nearby flatland.

Beckstoffer ties the price of his grapes to the retail bottle's price. With a bigger incentive to hit the \$25-a-bottle mark, a lot of technology goes into the new vineyard, geared to making handcrafted wine with the tools of big farming. Such wizardry has made it possible to produce an increasing number of high-priced wines.

But the high end may prove a victim of its own success. Between the bear market and terrorism's effect on travel, expensive wines are feeling squeezed. That leaves more room for stuff that goes for \$12 or so--and plenty of potential new business for growers like Beckstoffer.



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LAKE COUNTY GROWERS SEEK RED HILLS APPELLATION

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BYLINE: UCILIA WANG, THE PRESS DEMOCRAT

PAGE: E1

A group of Lake County grape growers is seeking federal recognition for a new viticultural district known for its red volcanic soil and, increasingly, grapes used to make red wine.

Seven vineyard owners have filed an application with federal regulators to establish the "Red Hills" appellation, a viticultural area covering 31,250 acres near Lower Lake.

By carving out a new appellation, growers hope to distinguish their harvests from those in the surrounding areas and raise the profile of wines made from Red Hills grapes.

If approved, Red Hills would become the fourth American Viticultural Area in Lake County. California currently has 68 federally recognized viticultural areas.

A viticultural area is defined by its geographic features, such as the soil, elevation and climate. Backers must prove the area possesses distinct characteristics that set it apart from surrounding vineyard areas.

"We feel very strongly that it is a unique area," said grower Ron Bartolucci, who has more than 100 acres within the proposed viticultural area. "The volcanic types of soil have a tendency of producing very intense, flavorful and complex wines." Grape growers who are proposing the Red Hills district say they don't expect opposition locally. But they are concerned about possible confusion between their Red Hills appellation and the proposed Red Hill viticultural area in Oregon also being considered by the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, which regulates appellations.

ATF officials, who are looking for public comments on both proposals, said one likely solution would be to include the names of each state as part of the monikers for the two viticultural areas. But the idea of seeing "Red Hills-California" on a wine label is drawing



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mixed reactions from grape growers.

Some growers said adding the state name defeats the purpose of highlighting a special grape-growing region. Others argued that including "California" in the new appellation would only enhance the stature of the Red Hills label because the state is known for producing fine wines.

Growers also suggested the public may not be as perplexed by the similar names as anticipated by the ATF, given that the Red Hill area in Oregon produces mostly pinot noir while Lake County's Red Hills is dominated by cabernet.

"The easier the name, the better it is from the marketing standpoint," said Rick Gunier, director of marketing for the Lake County Winegrape Commission.

The plan to establish Red Hills began about 18 months ago. The region gets its name from the red soil of volcanic origin, and it is the fastest-growing vineyard area in Lake County, Gunier said.

Growers have planted nearly 3,000 acres of vineyards in the Red Hills district. Another 3,000 to 5,000 acres could be planted in the future. Soil testing, weather data and other information have shown that those rolling hills have the right conditions to grow premium red wine grapes comparable to fruit from well-known growing regions in Napa, Sonoma and Mendocino counties, David Beckstoffer, president of Beckstoffer Vineyards, said.

Although Lake County historically is known to produce white grapes, the Red Hills area is destined to be a premium red grape-growing region, Beckstoffer said. The creation of the Red Hills appellation would help cultivate the branding of the grapes from the area.

Beckstoffer Vineyards has planted 400 acres in the Red Hills area and plans to add 600 more.

"It's a lot easier to sell grapes from recognized viticultural areas. When you go to a new area, you have to build up a reputation and name," Beckstoffer said. "For us it's a marketing challenge." Growers said they see Red Hills wines retailing at \$20 or above. You can reach Staff Writer Uclia Wang at 462-6473 or uwang@pressdemocrat.com. PHOTO: 1 by CLAY MCLACHLAN / The Press Democrat

MAP: by The Press Democrat: Proposed Red Hills AVA
Ron Bartolucci walks with his dog, Zinfandel, at Wild Cat Ridge's vineyard in what he hopes will be part of an American Viticultural Area.

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ATF Considers New Appellations in Oregon and California

Posted: Saturday, November 09, 2002

By *Lynn Alley*

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms is considering proposals to create two new American Viticultural Areas, and coincidentally, the appellations have nearly identical names: Red Hill, which is in Oregon's Willamette Valley, and Red Hills, which is in California's Lake County.

To avoid confusion between the two AVAs, the ATF has proposed calling the official designations "Red Hill–Oregon" and "Red Hills–California." Both proposed appellations are named after the red volcanic soils in their respective regions.

If approved, the Red Hill–Oregon AVA, which would be a subappellation of Willamette Valley, would consist of 5,500 acres southeast of Yoncalla, in Douglas County. The area, which has an average elevation of 1,200 feet, was originally settled in the mid-1800s. The first vineyard was planted in 1969. Currently, there are no bonded wineries in the area and only one grower, whose plantings total 194 acres, primarily of Pinot Noir.

The proposed Red Hills–California AVA is located in southern Lake County, which has been growing as a wine region. The southern tip of Lake County is sandwiched between the northern ends of Napa and Sonoma counties.

The Red Hills AVA would consist of 31,250 acres of rolling volcanic terrain bordered on the north by Mount Konocti and Clear Lake and on the south by the Coast Range. At one time, walnuts were the area's chief agricultural crop; now, 2,500 acres of vines are planted, mostly to Cabernet Sauvignon and Sauvignon Blanc.

The ATF is seeking public comment on the proposals until Dec. 30, 2002.

Possibly making matters more confusing, Washington recently added a new appellation, called Red Mountain AVA, in April 2001. Its name does not refer to the color of the mountain's soil, but rather to a red-hued native grass that covers its slopes.

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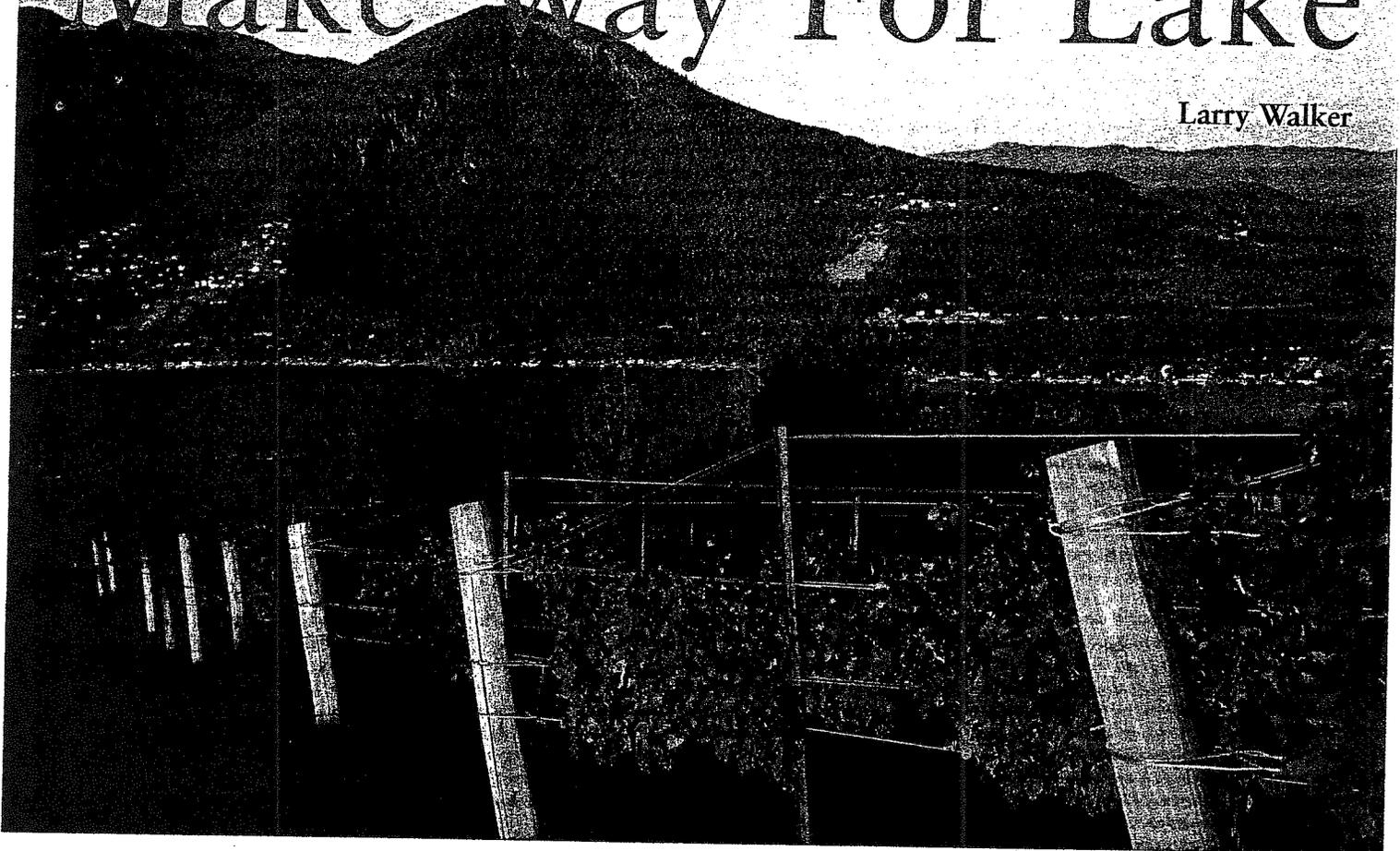
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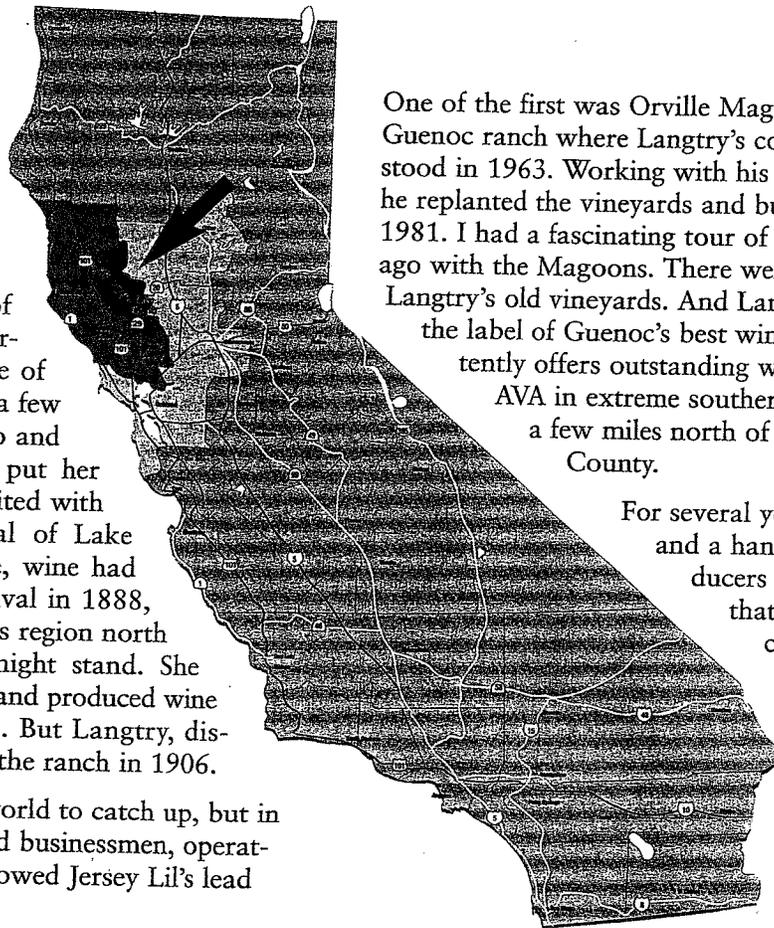
Make Way For Lake

Larry Walker



Lillie Langtry is quite likely the best known Lake County wine-grower, at least in some circles. Langtry, known in her heyday as "Jersey Lil," was an English actress of some fame and a close (very close) personal friend of Edward VII. During one of her tours of the United States, she took a few days off from the stage in San Francisco and visited Napa and Lake counties. She put her money on Lake and could well be credited with being the first to realize the potential of Lake County as a winegrowing region. True, wine had been made there prior to Langtry's arrival in 1888, but she believed the rugged mountainous region north of Napa could be more than a one-night stand. She brought in a winemaker from Bordeaux and produced wine on the Guenoc estate for several years. But Langtry, distracted perhaps by other concerns, sold the ranch in 1906.

It has taken a while for the rest of the world to catch up, but in the past few years a bunch of hard-nosed businessmen, operating without any royal support, have followed Jersey Lil's lead and gone north to Lake County.



One of the first was Orville Magoon. He acquired the Guenoc ranch where Langtry's country home still stood in 1963. Working with his wife, Karen Magoon, he replanted the vineyards and built Guenoc winery in 1981. I had a fascinating tour of the ranch some years ago with the Magoons. There were many traces of Langtry's old vineyards. And Langtry's picture graces the label of Guenoc's best wines. Guenoc consistently offers outstanding wines from its own AVA in extreme southern Lake County, only a few miles north of Calistoga in Napa County.

For several years the Magoons and a handful of other producers stood alone, but that is no longer the case. Lake County, some now say, could well be the next Napa.

But first, the facts. Lake County is part of the North

Continued on page 42



Temperatures in Lake County can be extreme, as seen in this photo of Amber Knolls Vineyards in the winter of 2000-2001.

Coast American Viticultural Area, but it is not a coastal county. Mendocino County lies between Lake and the Pacific Ocean, so there is very little moderating coastal influence on the climate. That means daytime temperatures during the peak growing season can soar into the high 90s Fahrenheit, often topping 100 degrees. Doesn't sound like the sort of climate where you would expect to find premium wine grapes growing. What saves it is Clear Lake, the largest natural lake within the

state of California. (Lake Tahoe, which is larger, is shared by California and Nevada.) At night, the huge lake acts as a heat sump, sucking cold air from the mountains down into the valleys. Within a few hours of sunset, temperatures can drop by more than 50 degrees, often falling into the high 40s in mid-summer. This radical temperature swing, coupled with rocky volcanic soils, leads to balanced grapes with intense, concentrated flavors.

Such conditions have attracted a new wave of vineyard planting in Lake and a growing, if still small, number of wines carrying the Lake County designation of origin. Ten years ago, there were about 3,000 acres of vines in Lake County. Today, 12,500 acres are planted, with some 9,500 in production. Total plantings could reach as much as 20,000 acres.

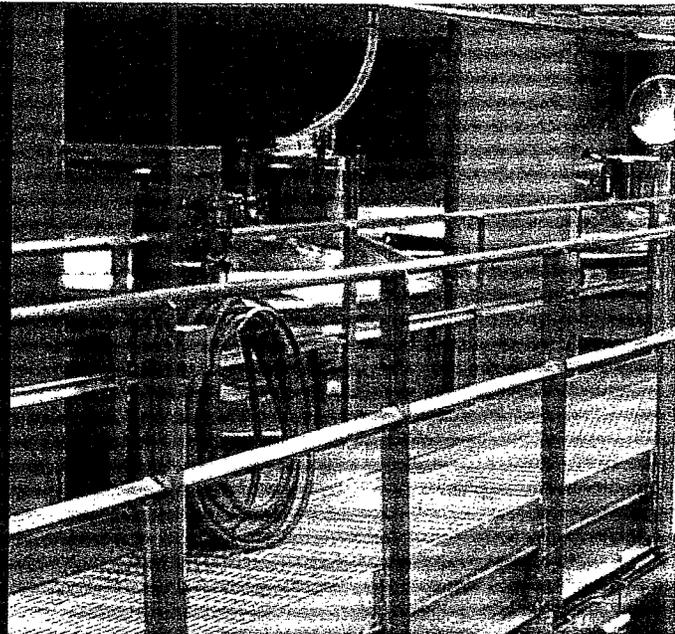
Other new plantings include several hundred acres by Beringer Blass and Kendall-Jackson. Chalone is drawing up plans to build a winery in Lake County to capitalize on grape production there. Jim Fetzer is planting a biodynamic vineyard and building a lakeside winery that could have a major impact on the area.

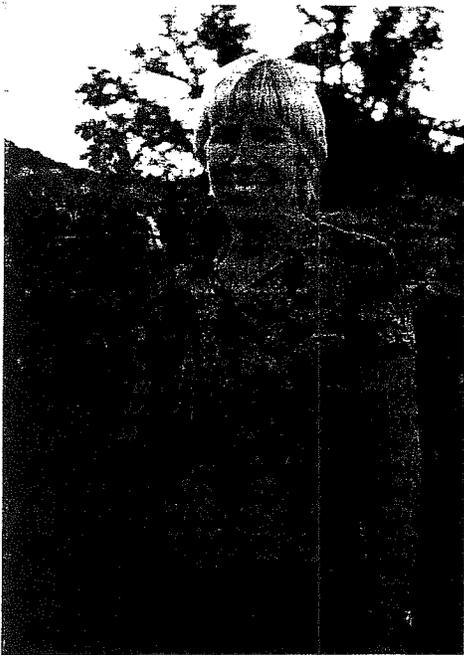
Andy Beckstoffer has formed the Red Hills Vineyard Company in Lake and has planted or is in the process of planting about 1,000 acres in three vineyards, under the direction of vineyard manager Frank Anderson. (See separate story on why Beckstoffer came to Lake County.) Amber Knolls Vineyard and Beckstoffer Red Hills Vineyards are both planted on volcanic mountain slopes. The still-unplanted Crimson Ridge Vineyard will cover a variety of terrain, soils and microclimates. The vineyard will be split into a number of small blocks, planted around islands of native vegetation, which will offer

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Viticulturist Dr. Erica Lundquist was hired by the Lake County Winegrape Commission to assist growers.

wineries a wide palate of flavor characteristics to choose from, Anderson said.

New plantings are coming on so fast that the Lake County Winegrape Commission has just hired Erica Lundquist to a newly created viticulturist position. Shannon Gunier, executive director of the Lake County Winegrape Commission, said Lundquist, who has a Ph.D. in soil science and an MS in agronomy from UC Davis, will

help Lake County growers implement the new code of sustainable winegrowing practices, and will work with growers in a continuing effort to improve fruit quality.

"Lifestyle" Wineries

Perhaps just as significant as the larger plantings, at least from the standpoint of gaining consumer credibility, "lifestyle" wineries are being built in Lake, similar to the boom that swept Napa 25 years ago. Jerry Brassfield, who made a fortune in the food business, has planted a 70-acre hillside estate with the goal of producing 25,000 cases of super-premium Bordeaux varietals and a little Pinot grigio, which could be Lake's best white wine hope, after Sauvignon blanc. Brassfield says he will concentrate on restaurant sales with a suggested retail price of about \$25 a bottle. His first wines are expected to be in the market in the spring of 2003.

His long-range plans include a gravity flow hillside winery with caves and a visitors' center. The entire estate is about 1,700 acres. Plans are being developed to petition for an American Viticulture Area called High Valley, which would include the Brassfield Estate.

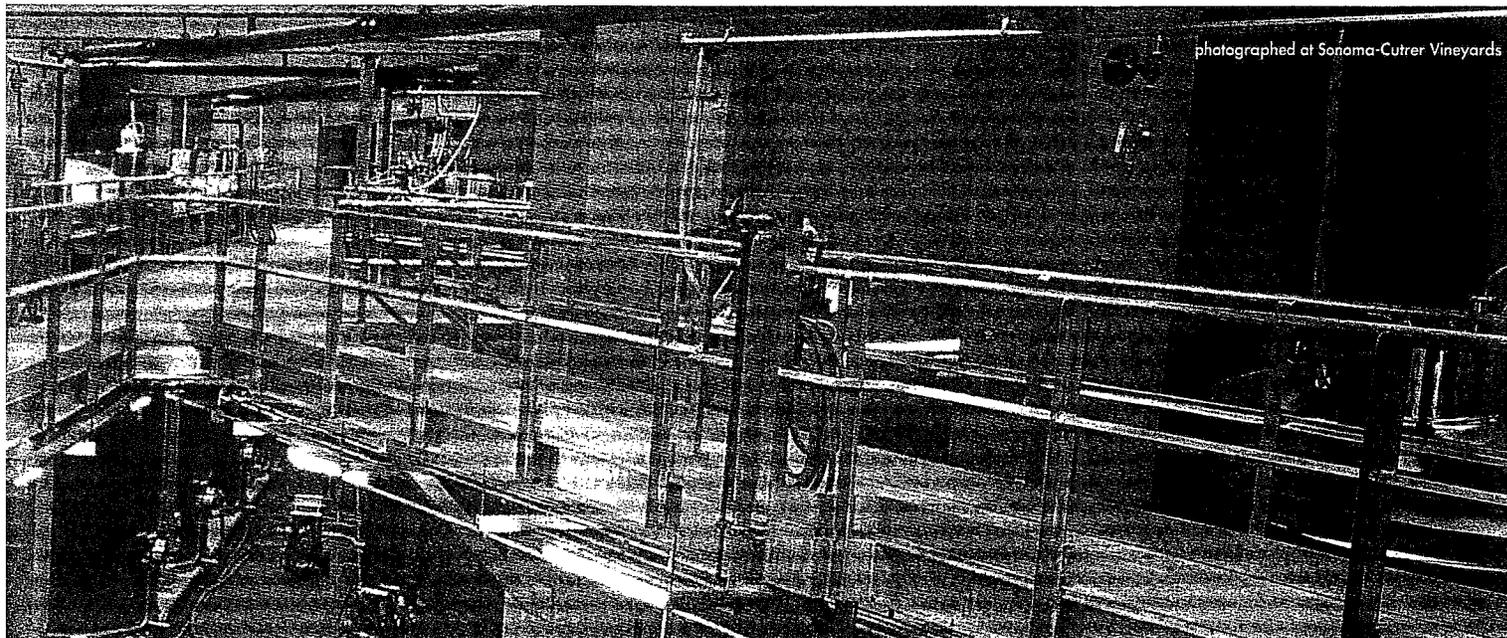
Tasting through barrel samples with winemaker Kevin Robinson, the potential of the site for pre-

mium wines came shining through. The 2001 Zinfandel was especially good as was a nonoaked Pinot grigio which had outstanding fruit. Brassfield said he was going with Pinot grigio rather than Pinot gris because he thought it had more cachet in the market.

Clay Shannon, owner of Shannon Ranches, farms about 1,200 acres of vines in Lake. He's the kind of vineyard guy who does have all the latest technology at his fingertips, but in the end, he says, there's nothing like getting out in the vineyards. "I like to talk to the guys who work out there every day, hear what they have to say," he said.

As an example, he told a story about how he almost went to war against crows in the vineyard until he found out what they were up to. "I saw all those crows coming down and I thought, 'Wow, they are after the grapes.' But I talked to the vineyard workers and they set me straight. The crows were there eating tomato hookworms. The hookworms aren't a major pest, but sometimes they will get on the vines, then the crows come and clean them out."

He also learned from the vineyard workers how to squeeze the leaves on the vine to check for moisture. "You need the technology," he said.



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"But you also need to be out in the vineyard."

Shannon, who manages the vineyards for Jerry Brassfield and for Jonathan and Jacqueline Dharmapalan's new Monte Lago Winery, among others, worked at Sutter Home before moving to Lake. Why Lake? "Well, first, the soils here are incredible. You can grow super high quality fruit and you can grow it at a price-per-acre that makes sense. It just doesn't pay to go to Napa. That's a lifestyle thing." Shannon estimates that typical annual farming costs in Lake for hillside vineyards run between \$3,500 and \$4,000 an acre.

He agrees with others that for Cabernet Sauvignon, hillside vineyards are the way to go. On the flats, Sauvignon blanc, Pinot gris and Merlot. Shannon said Sauvignon blanc might also be a good choice for hillside plantings. "You get an entirely different sort of wine from Sauvignon blanc grown on the hillside," he said. He added that Petite Sirah, Zinfandel and Tempranillo could also produce world-class wines in Lake, in his opinion.

For the first time, he's making his own Shannon Ridge wine from the 2002 vintage. "We have about 500 cases each of Petite Sirah, Zinfandel and Cabernet," he said. The wine is being made at Cardinale Vineyards in Napa County.

Serious Sauvignon Blanc

Sauvignon blanc was the first wine released from Monte Lago, owned by Jonathan and Jacqueline Dharmapalan. Tasting the 2000 and 2001 Sauvignon blanc from vines growing at an elevation of 2,000 feet, it became evident what Clay Shannon meant when he said higher elevation Sauvignon grapes in Lake yield a very different wine. There was the intense Sauvignon fruit, backed by a deeper complexity than in most lower elevation Sauvignon.

The Dharmapalans had always dreamed of owning a farm and

vineyard. They looked in several areas but liked what they saw in Lake County because of the sheer beauty of the location and the reasonable prices compared to Napa. There are 110 acres planted on the 440-acre property. "It is planted to our favorite varieties," Jacqueline Dharmapalan said. "Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet franc, Syrah, Petite Syrah, Petite Verdot, Zinfandel, my favorite Sauvignon blanc and Jonathan's favorite, Tempranillo. We even experimented with a couple of port varieties—Bastardo and Tinta Amarilla"

Jonathan Dharmapalan said it was his intention to make single-vine-

Lake County's First Sparkler

Gerald and Shirley Ployez established Ployez Winery in 1997 on the site of the former Stuermer Winery in Lower Lake. The Ployez winery features a visitors' center and tasting room. Other wines include Zinfandel, Chardonnay, Cabernet Sauvignon, Chenin blanc, Merlot, Sauvignon blanc and Gamay-Beaujolais. All of the grapes are grown in Lake County.

Gerald Ployez grew up in the Champagne region of France, where his family has produced champagne for three generations. He has also worked in Burgundy.

The winery is at 11171 Highway 29, Lower Lake, CA 95457; the phone is (707) 994-2106. LW.

yard wines which would represent the *terroir*, that indefinable sense of place, of the site.

Owners Myron and Marilyn Hold-enried and winemaker Mark Burch take Sauvignon blanc very seriously at Wildhurst Vineyards. The winery, which was established in 1991, is poised to become recognized as one of the most important Sauvignon blanc producers in the state, Burch believes. And after tasting with him at the winery in Kelseyville, I really can't argue the point.

Burch, a graduate of the "University of Gallo" with post-grad work

at Sebastiani and K-J, believes that the key to making great Sauvignon blanc is natural acidity. "I don't want to adjust the acid. I think natural acidity gives crispness and balances the mouthfeel." He believes he can get that fruit in Lake County because of long hangtime which enables him to pick at a lower Brix (22.2° to 22.5°) which enhances the grassy character. However, he does not want to see the fruit hanging so long that it loses the natural acidity.

Once harvested, he presses whole cluster fruit 2.5 tons at a time, often pressing up to eight batches a day, then holds the fruit at 40°F for one to two days. Burch believes this gives the wine more complexity and a bigger mouthfeel. "I'm looking for a Sauvignon blanc of great complexity and power, a wine that will age eight to 10 years," Burch said.

Jed Steele And Syrah

Veteran California winemaker Jed Steele, who was Kendall-Jackson's first winemaker and helped establish that brand, has based his Steele Wines in Lake County, specializing in Syrah, which he feels makes an outstanding wine in Lake, an opinion backed up by a recent vertical tasting of Steele Syrahs.

Steele encouraged a number of growers to plant Syrah and believes the human factor plays an important role. With some of Steele's growers, we tasted the 1996 through 2000 vintages. The wines were superb, showing a growing complexity and depth with bottle age, as well as adaptability to different foods.

"We do have the right weather and the right soils here," Steele said. "But also very important is the sense of dedication on the part of the growers to top-quality fruit."

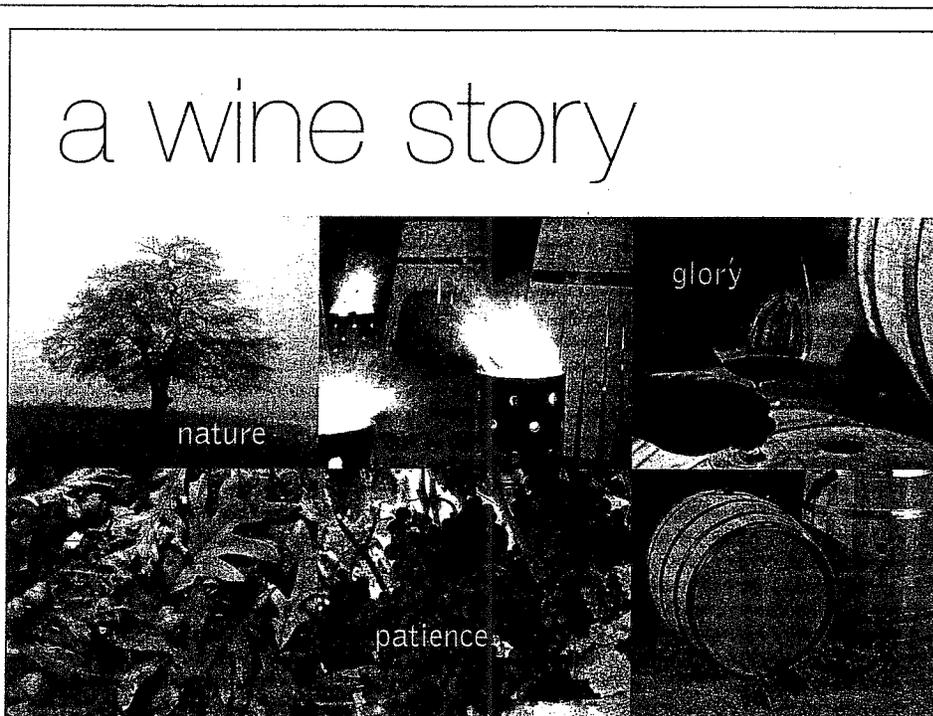
Kendall-Jackson has a long history in Lake. The winery was founded there in 1982 and still has a major commitment in Lake County. Ed Farver is the general manager of K-J in Lake. He sees the great strengths of the area as Sauvignon blanc, Semillon and Riesling on the valley floor. "There are promising signs for Cabernet and Syrah on some of the ridges, away

from the valley floor, but only time will tell. I would certainly stay away from cool climate varieties such as Chardonnay and Pinot noir," he said.

K-J is following sustainable agriculture guidelines in Lake, Farver said, including:

- Winery wastewater is treated and then recycled into vineyard irrigation

- Likewise, organic pomace material is recycled back into vineyards
- Ground water is monitored to determine quality and changes
- Compost and organic material is used for soil amendments
- Cover crops coupled with reduced tillage build organic matter and limit soil erosion
- Pests are trapped rather than



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poisoned, or controlled through natural predators

- Native oaks are maintained, with vineyards planted in areas once covered by scrub vegetation or on land previously used for grazing or agriculture.

Farver said that because of the variety of microclimates and extreme temperature changes, it was necessary to do very careful site analysis before planting. As for other problems, Farver said, "The Lake County turkeys like grapes, and they are voracious."

The Chalone Connection

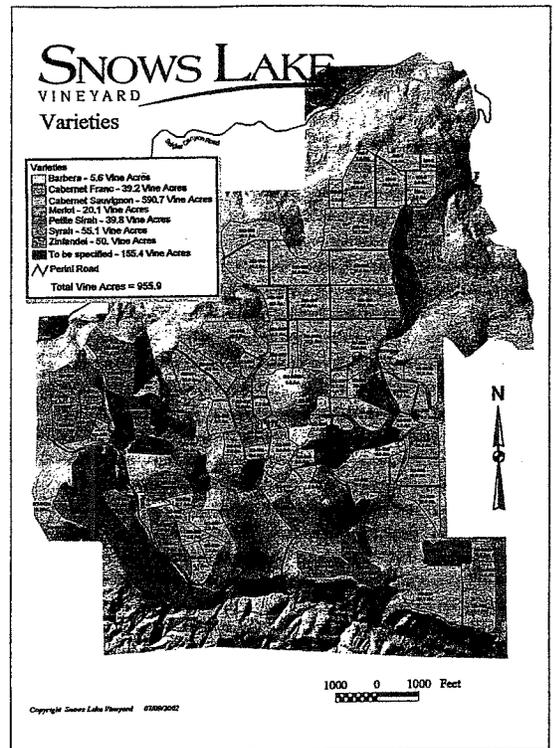
Tom Selfridge, the president of Chalone Wine Group, was with Kendall-Jackson when it was a startup winery in Lake County in the early 1980s. "Lake County is of particular interest to me," Selfridge said. Chalone has purchased a 45-acre walnut orchard near the Lake County airport and will have a winery finished there within three years for its Dynamite brand, a

spinoff from Carmenet, which was recently sold to Beringer Blass.

"Our Dynamite Merlot will be mostly from Mendocino County grapes," Selfridge said. "Over time, the Dynamite Cabernet Sauvignon will be over 90% Lake Cabernet. Right now it's about 50%." Selfridge said the new winery will probably have the capacity to produce at least 250,000 cases. "We are at 100,000 cases now," he said.

"I believe it will be a very important area for Cabernet. For a time, there will be a lot of Cabernet relative to demand, but long term, that will sort itself out. Lake County Cabernet, especially from the Red Hills area, is very good quality. I think if we could produce Cabernet there that would average \$20 a bottle retail price, we could produce outstanding quality wines."

Continued on page 48



Individual vineyard blocks at Snows Lake Vineyard are planted to order for wine producers. In the above map, the tan areas represent Cabernet Sauvignon.

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Among others, Dynamite is now sourced from Beckstoffer Vineyards and Snows Lake Vineyards, a fairly new operation owned by the Myers family in the Red Hills District of Lake County. The Snows Lake operation is somewhat unusual in that the vineyard is designed to deliver exactly what individual wineries want, according to John Adriance, the chief operating officer at Snows Lake. Adriance said most of

the grapes are under contract even before the vines are planted. Adriance compared the operation to a kind of vine shopping mall, where a few large clients, such as Chalone and Beringer, anchor the operation.

"Most of our contracts are for 10 years," he said. "We are divided into blocks with an average size of about 9.3 acres. We can even break down smaller, and wineries can contract with us to purchase grapes by the

Lake County—A Quick Look

The Lake County Winegrape Commission has identified four important grape-growing regions in Lake County:

- **Big Valley Area**, which stretches west from Kelseyville and Lakeport and from the edge of the southern benches north to the lakeshore. The soils are primarily clay loam and are very fertile. The area was once lake bottom. Best varieties are Sauvignon blanc, Chardonnay and Viognier. Grower Ron Bartolucci said, "The fruit from this area makes lively, crisp and fresh wines. Our Sauvignon blanc has just a little grass. There's lots of fresh fruit flavors."

- **Red Hills** covers some 49 square miles along the southern end of the lake. About 3,500 acres of new plantings have gone in there in the past few years. The soils are volcanic with good drainage, causing vines to work hard and leading to small, concentrated berries. Frank Anderson, viticulturist for Beckstoffer Vineyards said, "We get intense flavors here. Historically, many of the great wine regions of the Mediterranean are on high elevations with volcanic soil, very similar to the Red Hills."

- **Round Mountain** is a high-elevation growing area about three miles from Clear Lake, including the High Valley area. The soils are uniform with volcanic pumice rock. The area is known for Cabernet Sauvignon and rich, jammy Zinfandel. Grower Clay Shannon said, "The area is like a big sponge. The water drainage is incredible. It leaves vines with little water to feed on, leaving concentrated fruit."

- **Upper Lake** is a flat area with fertile soil. There are about 400 acres planted there, mostly to Sauvignon blanc. Wines from the area have more melon aroma, less of the traditional grassy character. Much of the Sauvignon blanc from the area goes to Kendall-Jackson and Guenoc wineries.

Lake County wineries include Abbott Winery, Brassfield Vineyards, Ceago Vineyards, Guenoc and Langtry Estate, Monte Lago, Steele Wines, Tule Bay Vineyards, Wildhurst Vineyards and Ployez Winery.

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block.” Adriance said they were now selling to 11 wineries. “If a winery wants a specific variety or site, we will plant to their specifications,” he added.

There are some 800 acres now planted, with another 925 acres plantable out of a total of 2,400 acres on the property. The elevation ranges from 1,900 to 2,400 feet. Soils are well-drained red volcanic soils on 5- to 25-degree slopes. All plantings are red varieties, 75% to Cabernet Sauvignon with the balance to Syrah, Zinfandel, Barbera, Cabernet franc, Merlot and Petite Sirah. Spacing is 5-by-8 feet on a bilateral cordon with vertical shoot positioning. A wide variety of clones are planted on low vigor rootstock, matched to the site.

Viticulturist Mike Vail pointed out that the cover crops are in mostly native grasses, and wildlife corridors have been established to Snobs Lake, which is a small vernal lake on the property where the annual Audubon Society bird count is held every year.

A series of catch dams and basins is used to help control erosion and he depends heavily on Integrated Pest Management to control insects. Deficit irrigation is practiced on the vines and hay bale sound barriers are used to muffle the noise from irrigation pumps.

Vail said he believed the great strength of Snobs Lake was the ability to deliver a wide variety of specific grape flavor profiles to wineries because of the large number of sites.

Jim Fetzer’s Ceago

Perhaps the operation that has drawn the most attention—and some controversy—to Lake is Jim Fetzer’s new Ceago Vinegarden on the north shore of Clear Lake. (Ceago is derived from a Pomo Indian word meaning, roughly, “grass valley” or “grass seed valley.”)

After selling Fetzer Vineyards to Brown-Forman, the family had to wait until the year 2000 before they



Jim Fetzer is back in the game with his Ceago Vinegarden in Lake County.

could enter into competition, even though they supplied about half the grapes for the Bonterra brand. Jim

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Fetzer is now in the midst of building what will be a biodynamic community on the shores of Clear Lake, beginning with a planting of 15 acres of Cabernet Sauvignon. Later this year, Fetzer will plant 28 acres of Syrah and Sauvignon blanc.

The Ceago Vinegarden is a 220-acre lakefront property between the villages of Nice and Lucerne. The aim is to develop an agricultural resort-style operation that promotes a holistic farming environment. The development will

mental efforts, beginning in the mid-1980s with the demonstration organic garden at Hopland in Mendocino County and continuing through the development of McNab Ranch near Ukiah, also in Mendocino, by Jim Fetzer. The ranch was dedicated to biodynamic and sustainable farming. It is now owned by Brown-Forman, but Jim Fetzer has taken the philosophy of the McNab Ranch development and brought it to Lake County.

As one example, the buildings are

Across the highway from Ceago, Fetzer will open a tasting room and visitors' center for his new Tule Bay Vineyards wines in April. He is renovating the former Bartlett Springs Mineral Water plant to create the new winery, using grapes from the property. All Tule Bay wines will be made from organically grown grapes, with the first vintages made from Mendocino grapes grown by the Fetzer family as Jim waits for new Lake County vines to mature.

In a sense, the wine world is also waiting for Lake County grapes to "mature." True, wine has been made in Lake County for more than a century. Leon Adams, in his book, *The Wines of America*, writes that there were 33 wineries in Lake County before Prohibition. Yet today, with fewer than a dozen wineries, Lake is poised to enter the world of premium wines and compete in the global market. There are now more than 50 wineries using Lake County and Lake County vineyard designations on their labels. Certainly, that number is going to grow over the next several years as the new vineyards develop.

Whether Lake will become the next Napa, as some have predicted, is really not the point. The fact is that Lake County is already producing wines that can compete with the best anywhere. The future looks bright indeed. ♣



On the shores of Clear Lake, Ceago Vinegarden will promote holistic farming through agri-tourism.

center around a hacienda-style compound of buildings with plantings of fruits, vegetables, herbs, grapes, kiwis, olives, walnuts, figs, wheat and a variety of flower crops. Domestic (and wild) animals will be incorporated into the project. There will be demonstration kitchens, dining areas and guest rooms.

The Ceago project has come in for some criticism, with the charge that Fetzer is more intent on creating a kind of biodynamic Disneyland than he is in serious winemaking. Anyone who has followed the operations of the Fetzer family since the 1960s will discount such charges. The Fetzer family has always been out front in environ-

constructed from blocks of recycled styrofoam material from Durango, Mexico. They are light enough to be easily lifted into place, are self-insulating and can be quickly ripped to adjust electrical wiring and plumbing. Much of the wood used in the project is recycled.

"What I want to do is not only make world-class wine, which I'm sure we can do in Lake County, but create an agriculture center for education. I want people to see where their food comes from, to have a connection with the land," Fetzer said. And, as one longtime Lake County resident said, "This project will attract the kind of tourists we want in Lake County."

COLA Online Clarification

A newsbrief in the November issue of *Wines & Vines* titled "BATF set for online Colas" stated "walk-in service will be suspended." The item should have read, "it is anticipated that walk-in service will be suspended." Subsequently we have learned that walk-in service will not be suspended. We apologize for any inconvenience. For details of the COLAs Online program, visit the Web site aff.treas.gov.

Beckstoffer Looks To Lake For Cabernet

Larry Walker

Andy Beckstoffer farms more than 2,000 acres of vines in Napa and Mendocino counties of California's North Coast. More than a dozen wineries use Beckstoffer fruit in vineyard-designated wines and more than 50 premium wineries buy his grapes. So when Beckstoffer began planting grapes in Lake County, the wine world took notice.

In 1997, Beckstoffer bought a 632-acre property which he calls Amber Knolls, which was planted to Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet franc and Petit Verdot. In 1998 he added the 84-acre Red Hills Vineyard for

Cabernet Sauvignon and in 1999 the 400-acre Crimson Ridge Vineyard, which will also be planted to Cabernet Sauvignon. All the vineyards are in the proposed Red Hills American Viticultural Area.

Why would a grower with famous vineyards in Napa Carneros, Oakville and Rutherford start planting grapes in Lake County? The answer is Cabernet Sauvignon.

"We think North Coast Cabernet is exciting. You can grow Cabernet better north of San Francisco than anywhere in the world and Lake County has simply been overlooked," Beckstoffer said in a recent interview.

Beckstoffer cited several attractions

in Lake, including the hillside soils—sandy and well-drained—and, not to be overlooked, relative land costs compared to Napa. In Napa, raw land can cost between \$70,000 and \$100,000 per acre. That initial investment can be halved in Lake County.

"You do need to go above 2,000 feet to find the best soils for Cabernet. I would say over 2,000 and below 2,400," he said. "You have to be picky."

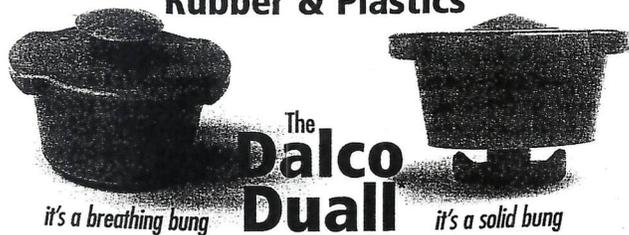
Can Lake County match Napa for quality?

"It isn't about whether you can

Continued on page 54

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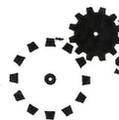
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challenge Napa. But look, in the last few years, \$25 Napa Cabernet has gone to \$40. We can still make an outstanding Cabernet in Lake for \$25, doing the same viticulture we do in Napa, which means doing it right," Beckstoffer said.

In his Lake County plantings, Beckstoffer is using precision farming techniques that can track irrigation and nutrient needs in blocks as small as seven acres. The plantings

experiment with different varieties, different clones and rootstocks and different viticultural techniques.

He likes Mendocino Cabernet but said it was getting tough to find good land for Cabernet there, another reason for the investment in Lake County. "I also like working with Mendocino Chardonnay," he said.

Napa, he said, is going to get better. "The thing to remember is that because of *phylloxera*, there are a lot of new plantings. Now, 2002 looks like a fabulous year, and the vines are still young. As the vines get a little age on them, the wines will be even better," Beckstoffer said.

He pointed out that the information available now to growers gives them much more knowledge of a particular site and how grapes adapt to that site. "We can look at the microclimate of a bunch of grapes now and tell how much sun is getting to them, rather than how hot the vine is. In the next 10 years, we will continue to develop new information technology to learn more about what is happening in the soils and water use. And all of that technology is being applied to Lake County, right from the start," he said.

Beckstoffer grows several hundred acres of Cabernet in the Rutherford AVA, which should put him on good terms with that elusive "Rutherford Dust."

"You can define it in two ways," he said. "In terms of *terroir*, the total is more than the sum of the parts. If you go back to the old days at Beaulieu, André Tchelistcheff was always interested in the vineyards. It all comes down to an orientation to the earth, the combination of elements that makes Rutherford a little different than Oakville. Secondly, there is the attitude. If you have the attitude that you are going to make great

wines, that interacts with the *terroir*."

He added, "The wines we are producing now are different than the wines from the '80s. But there is still a definite sense of place." ☞



Influential grapegrower Andy Beckstoffer began adding Lake County vineyards to his portfolio in 1997.

were done using satellite technology with rows based on elevation, plotted to a few centimeters. He spent two years doing the research before the first vines were planted.

He already has contracts to sell grapes to 11 wineries, including Caymus, Chalone and Stag's Leap. The grapes are priced to focus on the \$20-a-bottle market.

Beckstoffer says that by having grapes in three regions, it gives his organization more depth and adds to the ability to take risks and to

Vinality Looks To California

For the first time ever, officials from Vinality traveled to the United States to urge California wineries to participate in the annual wine show held in Verona. The next show will be held April 10-14. It will be the 37th Vinality.

Vinality officials met with representatives of California wineries in Napa and San Francisco to explain the benefits of Vinality, offering special packages and incentives.

Mary Lawler of the Hess Collection, who attended the event in Napa, said she was pleased to see Vinality reaching out to California and she said there was a possibility that Hess Collection would participate down the line. "We are very interested in exports and that would be a further opportunity in that area," she said.

Incentive packages include discounts on booth space, complementary interpreters, an "American Day" featuring a special program and gala dinner, a VIP meeting lounge as well as full transportation and lodging. A special travel and lodging package is also being developed for U.S. visitors.

Representing Veronafiere, parent company of Vinality, was president Camillo Cametti and general manager Giovanni Mantovani. "It is our pleasure to offer these special discount packages to California wineries," Cametti said. "We are committed to increasing the number of wineries and visitors from the United States. By 2004, we hope to have an entire U.S. pavilion at Vinality."

Vinality is one of the most important trade wine expositions and competitions in Europe, with more than 4,000 exhibitors from 26 countries participating in last year's event. There were more than 160,000 visitors from 84 countries at the show including 2,020 registered journalists from 50 countries.

Wineries interested in more information on Vinality 2003 can contact Balzac Communications at (800) 709-7667 or visit the Vinality Web site at vinality.com.

(Note # 7 of comment # 13)

Ms. Nancy Sutton
Alcohol & Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau
P.O. Box 4644
Petaluma, Ca. 94955

April 10, 2003

Dear Ms. Sutton,

Thank you for your recent response verifying the Bureau's receipt of our *Petition to Expand The Red Hills Viticultural Area Application*. I also appreciate your comments outlining additional information that would be helpful in considering the application request.

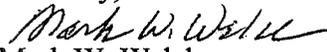
In this mailing, I am including two copies of original Kelseyville and Highland Springs quad maps delineating the boundaries of the Red Hills Addition, as you requested. In addition please note that I am sending you an original to page 6 of the application, correcting a typographical error which effects the accuracy of the data. Please substitute this page in the original document.

In your phone message you requested substantiation for the expressed rainfall range of 25-35 inches in the Addition. Generally, support for this data is provided by the Soil Survey of Lake County, California developed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service. (pgs. 21, 41, 42, 118, 120). Also, the Arkley Vineyard Adcon Weather Station reported seasonal rainfall, calculated from 7-1-2002 to 4-8-2003, to be 29.14 inches. Two and a half months still remain in the rainfall season. 2002 calendar year rainfall amounted to 25.89 inches. This Adcon Weather Station was installed and is monitored by AG Unlimited, a Ukiah consulting firm.

Degree day data, proving the area to be a Region 3 is also provided by the Arkley Vineyards Adcon Weather Station. Year 2000 degree days amounted to 3,175. Year 2001 degree days amounted to 3,427. Year 2002 degree days amounted to 3,017 degree days. Any total between 3,001 and 3,500 degree days is considered to be a Region 3. The average degree days over the three years is 3,206 which is virtually identical to the 3,244 degree days reported by the Compliance Service in their petition. The attached statement, supplied by AG Unlimited, confirms the accuracy of our rainfall and degree day information.

I hope that you find this information useful and responsive to your request. Please let me know if I can be of further help.

Sincerely,


Mark W. Welch



AG Unlimited, LLC

4550 El Roble Road
Ukiah, CA 95482

Ms. Nancy Sutton
Alcohol & Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau
P.O. Box 4644
Petaluma, Ca.94955

April 11, 2003

Dear Ms. Sutton,

Mark Welch, of Welch Vineyard Management Services, has asked me authenticate the rainfall and degree day data from the Arkley Vineyards Adcon Weather Station, referred to in his letter to you dated April 10, 2003.

We installed and monitor this station for Mr. Welch. The rainfall totals outlined for the calendar year 2002 and for the 2002-2003 seasonal rainfall are accurate. The 2000, 2001 and 2002 degree-day totals have also been verified and represent actual totals.

If I can be of any further help please don't hesitate to call.

Sincerely,

Michael P. Boer
Partner, AG Unlimited LLC

Welch Vineyard Management

10751-B Main Street
Potter Valley, CA 95469



(707) 743-1454
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wvms@pacific.net

PETITION TO EXPAND
RED HILLS VITICULTURAL AREA APPLICATION

The petition submitted by Compliance Service of America and signed by Sara Schorske, defining a particular version of a Red Hills Viticultural Area, fails to include other deserving locations overlooking the Clear Lake Basin. Our petition adds additional, upland red soils from the Clear Lake Viticultural area sub-appellation to the original Red Hills Viticultural Area petition.

Our addition overlooks Big Valley to the west, and extends to Hwy. 29 on the northern border, Adobe Creek Rd. to the south and Kelsey Creek to the east. The proposed area consists of approximately 2,180 acres planted primarily to red grape varieties. Where grapes are not planted, most of the additional acreage is planted to older walnut orchards.

This addition to the proposed viticultural area is comprised primarily of deep red to reddish gold soils, much of which are volcanic in origin. Most of the land is slightly sloping bench ground or hilly terrain up to 20% slopes. The elevation is 1,360 ft. to 1,640 ft., which is significantly higher than that of Big Valley which the area overlooks, and its proximity to Clear Lake produces a microclimate similar to that of the area encompassed by the original petition.

The detail which follows will outline the geographical uniqueness of the expanded Red Hills Viticultural area as defined in 27 CFR 4.25A(e)(1) so that it may be included as an American Viticultural Area in accordance with 27 CFR part 9.

This application is being submitted on behalf of all grape growers, present and future, who own land within the geographical boundaries of this addition to the original Red Hills Viticultural Area petition.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mark W. Welch". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Mark W. Welch
Welch Vineyard Management Services
Vineyard Mgr., Arkley Vineyards
Owner Adobe Creek Vineyards

Soil Description

This proposed addition to the Red Hills Viticultural area is comprised of soils of varied origin. These soils are generally upland red soils that are well-drained and of medium fertility. The following soil descriptions were provided by the Lake County Soil Survey maps generated by the United States Department of Agriculture.

The **Bally-Phipps** complex is comprised of uplifted dissected soils that are deep and well-drained. The Bally-Phipps surface and subsurface soils are generally red-colored gravelly sandy clay loams in our petition area. Sub-units of deep, red soils that are volcanic in origin are widespread in the 107 profile within the addition.

These soils possess a slope 5%-30%. The elevation range is from 1400 feet to 2500 feet. Rainfall averages between 25-35 inches and frost-free days average from 160 to 200 days. Average temperature is from 55 to 59 degrees F.

The **Manzanita-Wappo-Forbesville** unit is comprised of very deep, well-drained loam soils formed in alluvium from mixed rock sources. The **Forbesville** unit contains surface and subsoils comprised of yellowish red loam, red very gravelly clay, reddish-yellow very gravelly clay loam and red clay.

These soils possess slopes from 2% to 15%. Elevation ranges from 1350 feet to 1600 feet. Average rainfall is from 25 inches to 35 inches. Frost free days range from 160 to 200 days per year and average temperature ranges from 55 to 59 degrees F.

The **Manzanita** unit is comprised of a very deep well-drained soil on terraces derived in alluvium from mixed rock sources. Surface and subsurface color and texture include reddish yellow gravelly clay loam, reddish yellow gravelly clay and brown gravelly loam near or at the surface. This unit appears to be present in the Forbesville unit within the petition area.

Slopes within the petition area are from 8% to 25%. Elevation is from 1300 feet to 1600 feet. Average rainfall is from 25-35 inches and frost free days range from 160 to 200. The average temperature is from 55-59 degrees F.

The **WappoVariant** unit contains a very deep moderately well-drained soil on terraces. It formed in alluvium from mixed rock sources. Surface color and texture are comprised of yellowish red clay loam while subsurface strata contains

Soil Description cont.

yellowish red gravelly and very gravelly clay loams. This unit appears to be present in the Forbesville unit within the petition area.

Slopes range from 2% to 8%. Elevation ranges from 1400 to 1650 feet. The average annual precipitation is 25 to 35 inches and the average annual air temperature is 56 to 59 degrees. The average frost-free period is 160 to 200 days.

The **Talmage** unit is a very deep, very well-drained soil formed in alluvium from mixed rock sources. The textures of these soils are very light, consisting of gravelly and sandy loam stratas.

The elevation of this soil is 1300 feet to 1800 feet. Average annual precipitation ranges from 25-50 inches. The average frost-free period is 150 to 200 days and the average annual air temperature is 55 to 59 degrees F. The wine grape industry has a long history of quality grape production derived from soils within this unit.

The **Still** unit is comprised of very deep well-drained loam soils formed in alluvium from mixed rock sources dominated by sandstone and shale. Walnuts, grapes and pears have been historically raised on these soils.

The elevation range is from 1000 feet to 2000 feet. Average annual precipitation is 25 to 34 inches and frost-free days range from 150 to 205 days. The average annual air temperature is from 55 to 59 degrees F.

Most of the soils in the proposed addition to the Red Hills Viticultural area are red in color. Although the soils appear to be derived from a range of parent material, they share the characteristic of possessing high levels of sand, gravel and cobbles as part of their texture. As in the case of the soils of the original petition, these soils exhibit a range of color, from deep red to yellowish-red hues.

Viticultural Similarities In proposing a new viticultural district, it would be inaccurate and unfair to limit the red hills description to only the original petition boundaries. In effect, Clear Lake is rimmed by upland red soils possessing soil characteristics which historically have created premium wine grapes in other locales. These characteristics include soils that are deep and well-drained, of medium texture and fertility, and containing high gravel content. In addition, these soils are similar in elevation, have excellent sun exposure and share the same afternoon cooling breezes that generally moderate temperatures in the hills overlooking Clear Lake. Since no old wineries exist with an ongoing history of making premium wines within the original Red Hills Viticultural area boundaries

Soil Description cont.

and since the current plantings in the area are just coming into production, no clear sustained assessment can be drawn as to the uniqueness of the wines produced from these grapes. History would indicate that the rest of the hillside red soils rimming Clear Lake will generate similar high-quality wines based on soil, elevation and microclimate similarities. The Red Hills addition is an area with a longer history of grape production and quality assessment. Mature vineyards such as High Chaparral Vineyards and Nova Vineyards have established themselves as high quality producers of red wine grape varieties such as Cabernet Sauvignon and Zinfandel and Dorn Vineyards has excelled in producing Sauvignon Blanc. Other more recent vineyard owners who are successfully producing grapes in our proposed addition include Arkley, Holdenried, Rogers, Lauenroth and Rowen.

Name Recognition

We defer to the original applicants in their summary of the Red Hills-sited references. Their thorough research into the history of Lake County's red hills underscores the name recognition that currently exists. The creation of the Red Hills appellation and the subsequent acceptance of our product by the wine-buying public will be the driving force behind a much broader name recognition.

Distinguishing Climate

Rainfall The average annual rainfall of the addition to the Red Hills Viticultural area is generally between 25 inches and 35 inches and is therefore very similar to the rainfall within the original petition boundary.

Meteorology As in all parts of California's coast ranges, Lake County's climate is greatly dependent on the interactions of coastal air and local terrain, and microclimates abound. However, because of Lake County's relatively inland location and protecting mountain ranges and the influence of the Pacific Ocean there is less than in the part of the coast mountains closer to the ocean. The cool, moist ocean air has been slowly warmed by its overland passage by the time it reaches Lake County. Its temperature and humidity have also been altered by the changes in elevation the ocean wind has encountered in its inland travel. Therefore, local meteorological effects play a more important role in creating Lake County's microclimates, and more significantly account for the differences between various areas than in other coastal regions.

Generation of local winds in the proposed *Red Hills Viticultural Area Addition*. Winds develop as the result of temperature differentials. Temperature gradients due to differences in elevation generate mountain-valley winds, and water-land

Distinguishing Climate cont.

temperature differentials generate lake-land winds in accordance with the principles described below. Both factors, its hilly terrain and its proximity to Clear Lake, contribute to the unique wind patterns in the Red Hills addition area as well.

The mountain-valley winds are strongest at night when air in contact with hillside surfaces cools and becomes dense. This heavier air slips downhill, collects in the valleys and drains down along the water courses. Depending upon local topography, these downslope (“katabatic or gravity-driven) winds can be quite strong. After sunrise, when the hillsides warm, this process stops and eventually reverses. However, the reverse up-valley (“anabatic”) afternoon winds are weaker than the nighttime drainage winds.

Land adjacent to large bodies of water, such as Clear Lake, similarly experience winds driven by temperature contrasts. The phenomenon that water warms more slowly than adjacent land during the day, and also holds its heat longer at night, is the driving force that creates land-water winds. At night, air passing over Clear Lake is warmed, becomes less dense, and rises, while air over the relatively cool land on shore becomes denser and sinks. This causes nocturnal katabatic winds to develop towards the lake. During the day, the land quickly becomes warmer than the lake, reversing the process and causing the winds to blow inland. Again, the on-shore (anabatic) daytime winds are weaker than the off-shore nocturnal winds.

In many locations, mountain-valley breezes and land-water breezes result in incomplete circulation. Warmer air that is displaced by the cooler breeze rises, disperses broadly and mixes with lower air slowly, so that little of the displaced air is re-circulated in the breeze. In the Clear Lake basin, however, because both processes occur in a relatively small and confined space, these winds are a kind of perpetual motion machine.

Cool, offshore winds draining from the hills to the valleys at night warm when they settle over Clear Lake, and begin to ascend. The lake-heated air fills the basin to its spill over points. Some of it mixes with the descending drainage winds to recycle once more.

During the day, as the land warms much more quickly than the lake waters, the land-heated, up-valley winds rise to ridge tops. Much of this warmed air is drawn back into the system to replace air cooling over the lake, descending and flowing on-shore again. Only part of it spills over the surrounding mountains and leaves the basin.

Distinguishing Climate cont.

This mountain-valley, lake-land system is so dominant in the Clear Lake basin that it operates all day. Studies from the Lake County Air Pollution Control District mechanical weather station network indicate that local katabatic drainage winds predominate up to eighteen hours a day, during the night and morning hours. The afternoon regime, which predominates the remaining six hours each day, is the opposite of the ones just described. (Data reported in Environmental Data Compilation: Red Hills Geothermal Prospect Area, Red Hills Viticultural Area Application Pgs 15-16)

Natural Frost Protection in the Red Hills Viticultural Area Addition The proposed addition includes a range of elevations most of which are subject to no regular spring frosts or occasional spring frosts just as the original area. Spring frost is directly related to the elevation of the site and the natural “drainage” which exists at that site. Generally, the higher the elevation and the greater ability that air has to flow from high terrain to low, the less chance for serious frost to occur. A portion of a property that I own within the original application boundary is subject to more spring frost than two properties which I farm in the addition area. Elevation and “drainage” are clearly the key factors as stated above. In general, the open terrain and proximity to Clear Lake allow the “wind machine” effect described here and in the original application, to regularly occur in the area. The lands, then, within the proposed Red Hills applications are clearly far less apt to experience spring frost than the Big Valley area to the west. Big Valley is a large, relatively flat valley lacking elevation and air movement and therefore experiencing significant spring frosts.

Heat Summation in the Proposed Red Hills Viticultural Area Addition

The vineyard industry regularly employs the use of Winkler’s system of calculating heat units, expressed as degree days, within a particular growing area. Mr. Winkler’s work defined a system of Climatic Regions that has been used to study the suitability of growing different varieties within the expressed regions. The system has been defined as follows: Region 1 (less than 2500 degree days), Region 2 (2501 to 3000 degree days), Region 3 (3,001 to 3500 degree days), and Region 4 (3,501 to 4,000 degree days) and Region 5 (over 4,001 degree days).

As in the original application, due to similar elevation and aspect, the proposed addition is clearly within Region 3. Arkley Vineyards, located within the Red Hills addition has logged an average of 3225 degree days over the past 4 years (through 2002), and this weather station site is on the lower third of the property. From observation, the higher elevations of the property would be somewhat warmer if tracked. Bud break dates are earlier in the Red Hills addition than in the Big

Distinguishing Climate cont.

Valley to the west. Early harvest dates confirm the suitability of growing the principal red varieties of Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Petite Sirah, Syrah, Merlot and Zinfandel, in line with the Red Hills area defined in the original application. The grape harvest in our Red Hills area is consistent with the comments made by Schorske and confirms that we too, are significantly warmer than the Big Valley to the west.

Conclusion

We ask that you give serious consideration to the Red Hills appellation addition being submitted by Mark Welch on behalf of all growers in the proposed area. Our proposal is meant to be an addendum to the original appellation request. The viticultural similarities between our addition and that of the original application are undeniable. The red-hued, gravelly, well-drained soils and the microclimate of the benches surrounding Clear Lake are an ideal location for the development of superior Lake County wines. In such a young industry, it is imperative that we include as many compatible sites as can be identified in our appellations. The existing vineyards in the Red Hills addition indicate that they are among the best red grape locations in the county.

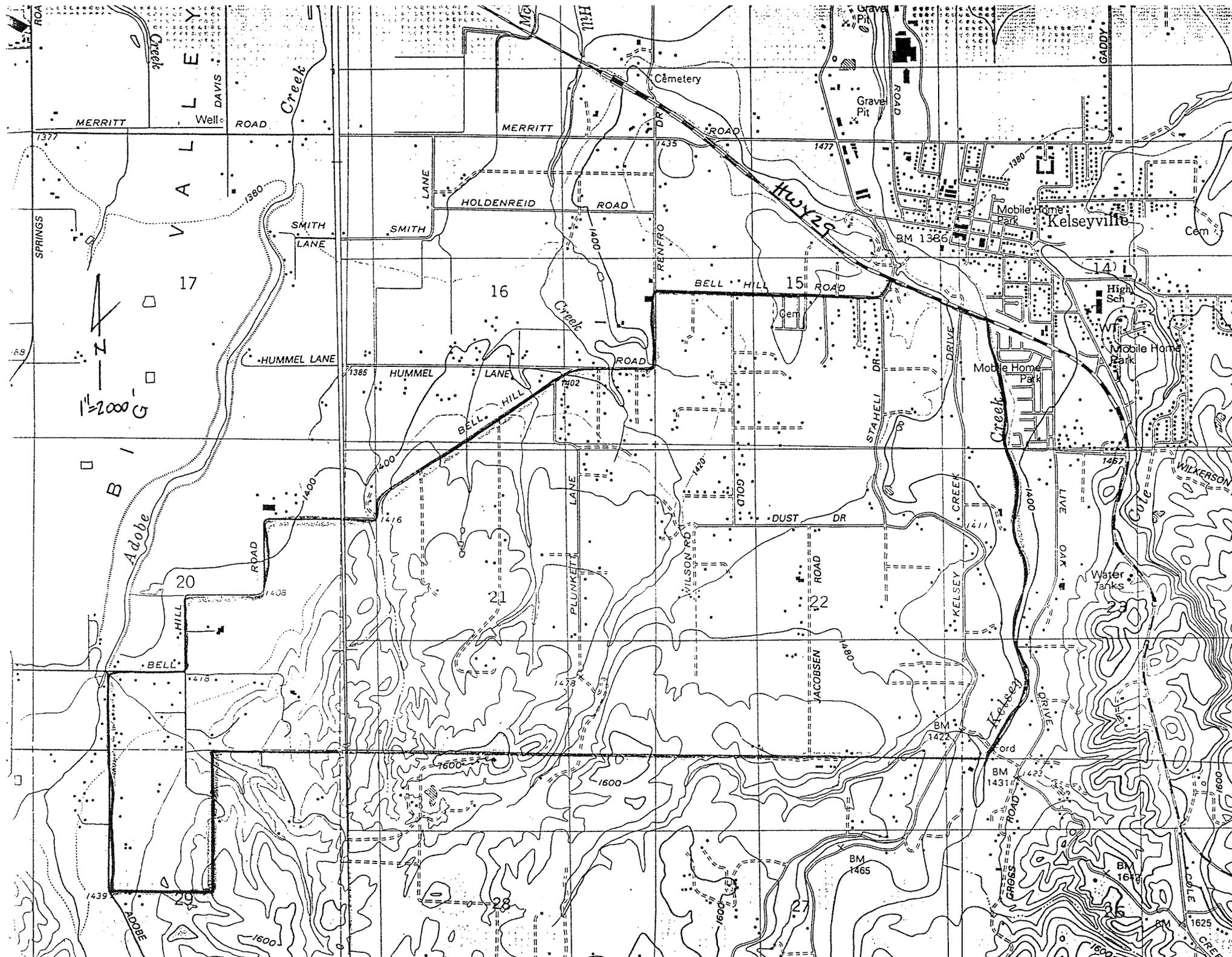
This application in no way attempts to undermine the original goal of creating an appropriate Red Hills appellation. We applaud the efforts that the Red Hills Appellation Committee put forward in their original submittal. However, by way of an expanded district, which maintains the integrity of the expressed viticultural standards, we can offer greater opportunity to the grape growers of Lake County. Modestly enlarging the district to include other deserving ranches will lead to a greater public awareness of the fine red wine that Lake County can produce from its unique upland benches surrounding Clear Lake.

BOUNDARIES

Boundaries are found on two U.S.G.S 7.5' series topographic maps, the Kelseyville (1993) Quadrangle and the Highland Springs (1993) Quadrangle.

The beginning point is the intersection of Bell Hill Road and Adobe Creek Drive as shown on the Highland Springs Quadrangle, located within Section 20, Township 13 North, Range 9 West, Mount Diablo Meridian.

1. From the beginning point, follow Adobe Creek Drive south 3800 feet to an angle in Adobe Creek Drive.
2. Then go 1800 feet East.
3. Then go 2500 feet North to the south line of the referred to Section 20.
4. Follow the south lines of Sections 20, 21, 22, and a portion of 23, East about 13,500 feet to the center of Kelsey Creek.
5. Follow Kelsey Creek northerly about 7500 feet to Highway 29.
6. Follow Highway 29 northwesterly about 1800 feet to the intersection with Bell Hill Road.
7. Follow Bell Hill Road westerly and southwesterly about 3.6 miles to the point of beginning.



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April 21, 2003

Ms. Nancy Sutton
Regulatory Specialist
Alcohol & Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau
205 Marylyn Circle
Petaluma, CA 94954

BY FEDERAL EXPRESS
415-271-1254

Re: Rebuttal to Comment Requesting Extension of Boundaries
Notice 961, Red Hills (California) Viticultural Area

To Whom it May Concern:

Thank you for providing us a copy of the comment from Mark W. Welch, and an opportunity to respond to it. We find Mr. Welch's request to be entirely without merit.

Mr. Welch claims that the Red Hills petition "fails to include other deserving locations overlooking the Clear Lake Basin," and requests the addition of approximately 2,000 more acres ("the comment area") to the proposed AVA. The Red Hills appellation committee studied the history and geography of the Red Hills area of Lake County for over a year before proposing the new appellation. Later, when the western boundary was questioned by our neighbors, we thoroughly considered the merits of including additional acreage, and we revised our proposal as liberally as we felt was warranted by the physical and historical evidence. We believe the boundaries as proposed in our latest comment letter are the maximum reasonable boundaries for the delimited grapegrowing area to be known as Red Hills Lake County.

In order to support our position that Mr. Welch's request should be denied, the following reasons are provided for your consideration and use:

Soils

Mr. Welch claims that many of the soils in his proposed addition are red soils of volcanic origin, similar to the soils in the petitioned area. In support of his comment, he presents "evidence" that is a combination of *selective* quotes from the Lake County Soil Survey and statements that deviate from information reported in that resource. However, an objective examination of the official descriptions of the soils involved fails to support his claim.

For example, he wrote, "The Bally-Phipps surface and subsurface soils are generally red-colored gravelly sandy clay loams in our petition area. Sub-units of deep, red soils that are volcanic in origin are widespread in the 107 [Bally-Phipps] profile within the addition." The description of this soil type in the Lake County Soil Survey does not substantiate either his claim that Bally-Phipps soil is volcanic in origin or his assertion that it is red in color. Following is an excerpt from the Lake County Soil Survey (pages 21-22), with emphasis added:

"The Bally soil is deep and well drained. It formed in alluvium derived from mixed rock sources. Typically, the surface layer is *yellowish brown* gravelly sandy clay loam 2 inches thick. The upper 8 inches of the subsoil is *yellowish brown* gravelly sandy clay loam, and the lower 27 inches is *variegated brown and reddish yellow* very gravelly sandy clay.... The Phipps soil is very deep and well drained. It formed in alluvium derived from mixed rock sources. Typically, the surface layer is *dark brown* loam 6 inches thick. The subsoil is *brown* gravelly clay loam about 15 inches thick. The substratum to a depth of 73 inches is *brown and yellowish brown* gravelly and very gravelly sandy clay loam...."

Admittedly, some of the soils in the comment area are officially described as being red in color. Nevertheless, they are entirely different soils from the group of red volcanic soils which is one of the primary features of the petitioned area.

Exhibit C submitted with the original petition (a color-coded "General Soil Map" from the Lake County Soil Survey), shows that there *are* other areas in Lake County which have the *same* soil types as the proposed Red Hills AVA. As you know, the proposed Red Hills Lake County AVA does not encompass all occurrences of these soils in Lake County. The excluded areas lack the *other* distinguishing geographical features that characterize the proposed AVA, and they are not part of the place historically known as "Red Hills." Areas contiguous to the proposed AVA that have the same red volcanic soils have been purposely excluded from the proposed AVA for reasons mentioned in the original and revised petitions. Other areas in the county that have the same soils are distant from the proposed area. The area proposed to be added by Mark Welch's

comment is not contiguous with the proposed area, and *not* within any of the areas that have the same soils.

The red volcanic soils that characterize the proposed Red Hills AVA — soils in the Glenview-Bottlerock-Arrowhead, Konocti-Benridge, and Collayomi-Aiken-Whispering groups — are described in the Lake County Soil Survey as “gently sloping to very steep soils on volcanic hills and mountains.” The parent materials listed are entirely volcanic: obsidian, andesite, basalt, dacite, pyroclastic material, pyroclastic tuff.

Soils in the Bally-Phipps group are described as “moderately sloping to very steep soils on uplifted, dissected hills.” The parent material listed is “old alluvium derived from mixed sources.” Soils in the Manzanita-Wappo-Forbesville group are described as “gently sloping to moderately steep soils on dissected alluvial terraces.” The parent material listed is “semiconsolidated uplifted sediment of the Cache Formation.” These soils have very little if anything in common with the red volcanic soils in the proposed Red Hills Lake County AVA.

Climate

Mr. Welch’s climate evidence consists of several pages of text plagiarized directly from the Red Hill petition, with the addition of a few pieces of rainfall and degree day data.

The narrative Mr. Welch borrowed from the Red Hills petition describes the meteorological principles that produce winds in the Red Hills area. These principles undoubtedly hold true in other locations with similar terrain as well, and are arguably operative in the comment area. However, the winds produced by these principles in the area southwest of Kelseyville are not the same as the winds they produce in the Red Hills area. Two wind regime maps, copied from the *Environmental Data Compilation for the Red Hills Geothermal Prospect Area*¹, are attached as **Addendum A, page 1 and 2**. These maps show wind patterns in the southern half of Lake County, and clearly indicate that the winds in the Kelseyville area, southwest of Mount Konocti, are distinct from those in the Red Hills area, southeast of Mount Konocti.

The rainfall and temperature data in the comment indicate that, coincidentally, the comment area has similar rainfall and heat summation characteristics as the

¹ Prepared by Gennis and Associates, Engineers, for Occidental Geothermal, Inc. and Republic Geothermal, Inc. in March 1979

petitioned area. However, in a county with as varied conditions and terrain as Lake County, there are most likely many places that have Region III growing conditions and between 25 and 35 inches of rain a year. That similarity alone is not sufficient to claim that all such places belong in one viticultural area.

Name

Mr. Welch acknowledges that the Red Hills petition amply proves that the name "Red Hills" has name recognition. However, he doesn't even attempt to demonstrate that the place name "Red Hills" has ever been associated with the comment area. In fact, it never has, although the area covered by his comment has been associated with *other* names. Following are some of the names associated with the comment area:

Kelseyville Bench. The Holdenried family (one of the growers in the comment area listed on page 4 of the comment) operates the Wildhurst Vineyards winery and actually makes two "limited edition" wines from their Plunkett Creek vineyard located in the comment area. These wines are known as the "Plunkett Creek" series. The winery's web site describes the location of the vineyard as the "Kelseyville Bench" area, as follows:

"The Kelseyville Bench is one of three distinct micro climates in the Clear Lake viticultural area. Originally a lava flow, it is a transition region between the volcanic mountain and the alluvial flood plain. Here, at 1600 feet above sea level, with well-drained soil and excellent exposure, lies our Plunkett Creek vineyard...."

A copy of the relevant web page is attached as **Addendum B**. There is no vineyard map on the web site, but the USGS map clearly shows Plunkett Lane within the comment area.

Kelseyville. The comment area is closely associated with the name "Kelseyville" in other contexts as well. It is part of the Kelseyville Area Plan developed by the Lake County Planning Department. Attached as **Addendum C, pages 1 and 2** are two maps from the Kelseyville Area Plan. The Kelseyville Planning area is also shown on **Exhibit B page 1**, submitted with the original petition.

As stated in the original petition, the proposed Red Hills Lake County AVA is located partially within the Lower Lake Planning Area, the Cobb Mountain Planning Area, and the Rivas Planning Area.

Highland Springs. The area Mr. Welch seeks to add to the Red Hills AVA is not contiguous with the rest of the petitioned area. Rather, it is a separate area lying

almost a mile west of the boundaries proposed in our latest comment. At approximately the same distance from the comment area, to the southwest, lies the historic Highland Springs, clearly designated on all maps of the area. These springs became a popular resort destination in the 19th century, and familiarized many people with the Highland Springs area, and with the name "Highland Springs." The area associated with the Highland Springs extended at least to Adobe Creek, near one of the boundaries of the comment area, according to this excerpt from the Lake County Kelseyville Area Plan, page 3—4:

"The Highland Springs were discovered in the southwest section of Big Valley in the late 1860's. Early development included a cabin and a tunnel dug into the bank of Adobe Creek to improve the springs. A larger commercial enterprise was established at Highland Springs with the completion of a hotel in 1875. By 1910, a large frame hotel and a half-dozen cottages along Adobe Creek could provide accommodations for up to 200 guests at the spring."

Big Valley. Although the comment area supposedly "overlooks" Big Valley, there is evidence that it has been historically considered to be part of Big Valley. Below are listed a number of references supporting this observation:

1. The description of Highland Springs quoted above from the Kelseyville Area Plan indicates that the Highland Springs area is "in the southwest section of Big Valley."
2. The Natural Resources section of the Kelseyville Area Plan (on page 3—1) describes Big Valley as a region that includes the comment area, since the comment area is clearly within the region "bounded by the Mayacmas Mountains":

"The planning area consists of several physiographic features which are prominent. This includes Big Valley, a structural basin that is part of the larger Clear Lake Basin. This valley is bounded by the Mayacmas on the southwest, Mount Konocti on the east and southeast, and by Clear Lake on the north. The valley covers about 31 square miles attaining a maximum length and width of 7 miles. Elevations on the valley floor range between 1,330 and 1,440 feet. The surrounding mountains rise to heights of 2,550 feet to 4,300 feet above sea level."

It is interesting to note that Mr. Welch states that the elevations in the comment area, of 1,360 to 1,640 feet are "significantly higher than that of Big Valley." However, according to the figures given in the Kelseyville Area Plan, most of the

comment area is not much higher than the average spot on the valley floor. In fact, the elevation of Clear Lake itself is 1,326 feet.

3. The Agriculture section of the Kelseyville Area Plan contains a map of prime agricultural soils (attached as **Addendum D**), including the comment area, and implies that the entire area of prime agricultural soils is considered to be within "Big Valley." It states (on page 3—16):

"Big Valley, within the Kelseyville Planning Area, contains over 48% of the county's agricultural land. The most predominate crops are pears, walnuts, and wine grapes....

The planning area also contains many areas suitable for the growing of wine grapes. Wine grapes can grow well in areas that do not possess prime agricultural soils, but on soil Classes V through VII, provided that there is adequate soil depth, drainage, and water available.... The Rural Lands designation that provides for average lot sizes of 20-40 acres would be appropriate for these areas."

4. An 1881 volume entitled "*History of Napa and Lake Counties, California*," published by Slocum, Bowen & Co., Publishers, contains a long chapter on Big Valley Township. This account clearly indicates that the comment area was considered to be part of Big Valley.

The section on "Topography" (pages 157-158) states:

"Big Valley is the garden spot of Lake County, and from its great size, compared with the other valleys in the county, it well deserves to be called Big Valley. Beginning at the foot of Uncle Sam [Mount Konocti] this valley extends in a circular course to the southwest, embracing Kelseyville and Highland Springs; thence northerly to Lakeport."

This description includes both the comment area and Highland Springs within Big Valley. Highland Springs is southwest of the comment area, at an even higher elevation.

5. The section on Highland Springs in the same book (page 186) confirms the inclusion of Highland Springs within "Big Valley":

"These springs are situated at the extreme southwestern corner of Big Valley, about eight miles from Lakeport and six from Kelseyville...."

Ms. Nancy Sutton
April 21, 2003
page 7

The above references are far from an exhaustive review of the historical name associations with the comment area, but are sufficient to show that the area is neither historically or currently known by the name "Red Hills."

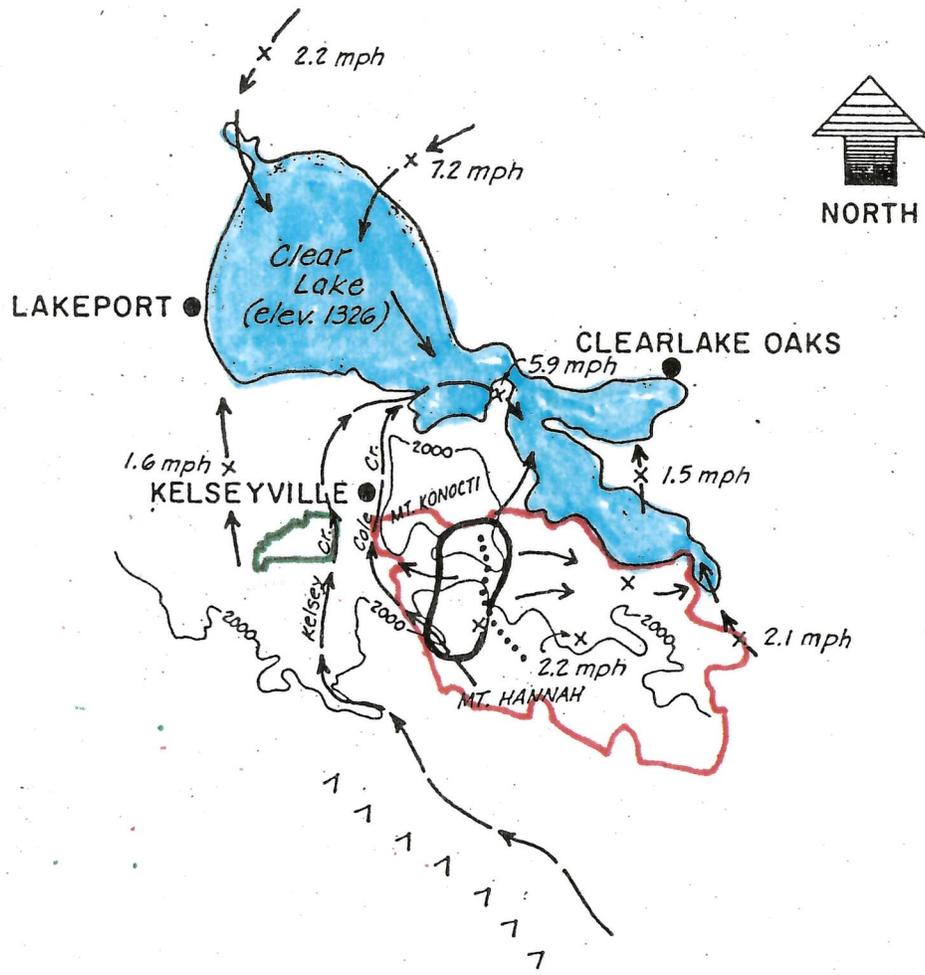
For all of the above reasons, we urge TTB to deny the request to extend the boundaries of Red Hills Lake County, made by Mark Welch in his comment.

Respectfully,

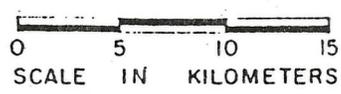
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sara Schorske", with a large, stylized flourish extending to the left.

Sara Schorske
on behalf of the Red Hills Appellation Committee

Encl.



— RED HILLS LAKE COUNTY AVA BOUNDARY
 — COMMENT AREA BOUNDARY



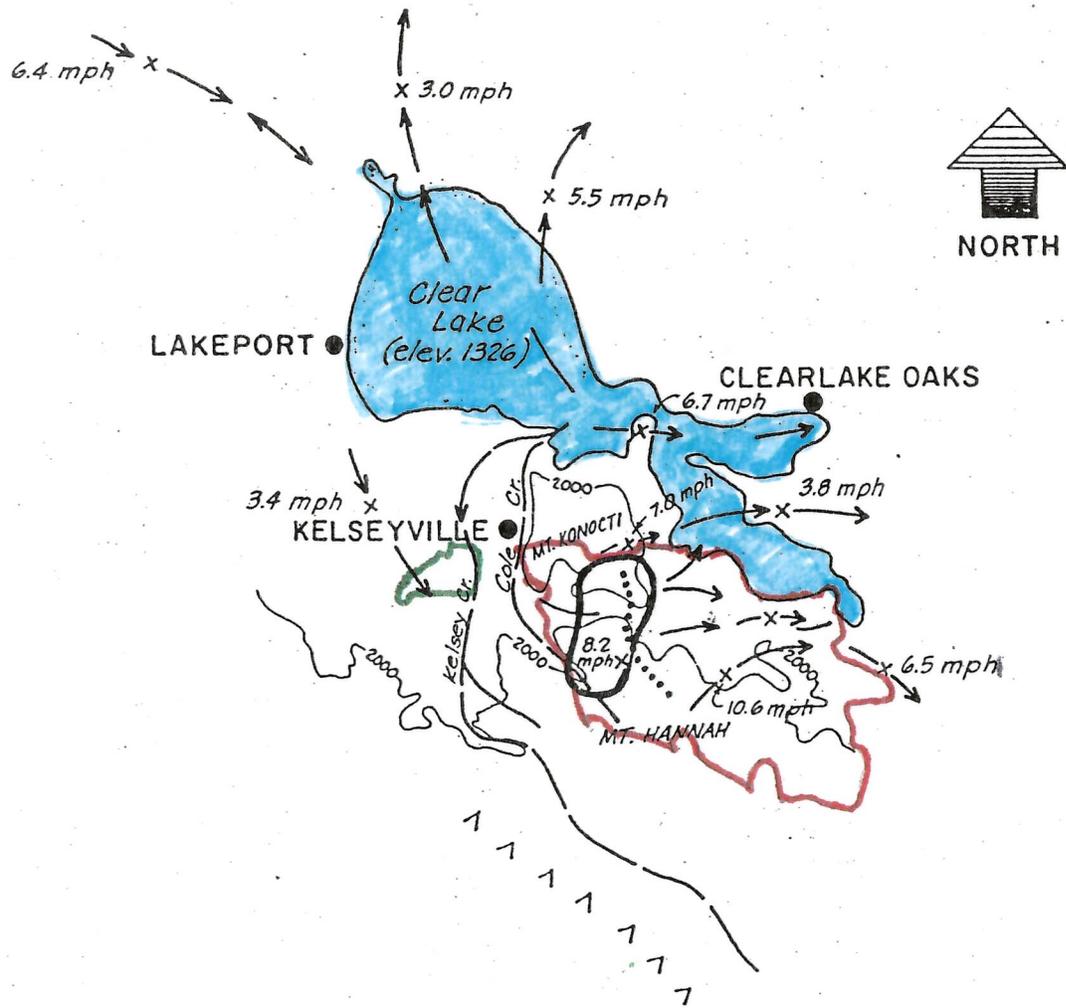
EXPLANATION

- AIR SHED BOUNDARY
- x WIND MEASUREMENT SITES
- TOWNS
- WIND DIRECTION, WIND SPEED, M.P.H.
- STUDY AREA BOUNDARY

NOTE: MORNING AND NIGHT WIND REGIME PERSISTS ABOUT 18 HOURS PER DAY.

**RED HILLS GEOTHERMAL PROSPECT
 MORNING WIND REGIME PREDICTED MESOSCALE**

FIGURE 17



— RED HILLS LAKE COUNTY AVA BOUNDARY
 — COMMENT AREA BOUNDARY

EXPLANATION

0 5 10 15
 SCALE IN KILOMETERS

- AIR SHED BOUNDARY
- x WIND MEASUREMENT SITES
- TOWNS
- WIND DIRECTION, WIND SPEED, M.P.H.
- STUDY AREA BOUNDARY

NOTE: AFTERNOON WIND REGIME
 PERSISTS ABOUT 4. TO 6 HOURS.

**RED HILLS GEOTHERMAL PROSPECT
 AFTERNOON WIND REGIME PREDICTED MESOSCALE**

FIGURE 18



Limited Editions

- ▶ Red Wines
- ▶ White Wines
- ▶ Port
- ▶ Limited Editions

Plunkett Creek Series Wines

The Kelseyville Bench is one of three distinct micro climates in the Clear Lake viticultural area. Originally a lava flow, it is a transition region between the volcanic mountain and the alluvial flood plain. Here, at 1600 feet above sea level, with well-drained soil and excellent exposure, lies our Plunkett Creek vineyard, the inspiration for a series of single-vineyard reserve wines. Plunkett Creek Series wines are the very best each vintage offers from a single vineyard. Only 150 cases are made of any varietal, and the wines are vinified separately, aged in 100% French oak, and allowed twelve to eighteen months in the barrel and additional aging after bottling. Each is the ultimate expression of the synergy between earth and fruit, sun and soil, weather and the winemaker's art.



Plunkett Creek Series Merlot



Vintage 1999
A rich and multilayered Merlot, plummy, smoky and spicy.

[DETAILS](#)

Bottle price: \$22.00
Case price: \$224.00

Plunkett Creek Series Cabernet Sauvignon



Vintage 1999
Classic Cabernet in an elegant Bordeaux style

[DETAILS](#)

Bottle price: \$22.00
Case price: \$224.00



Order Request

Order Request

KELSEYVILLE PLANNING AREA

LAKE COUNTY GENERAL PLAN

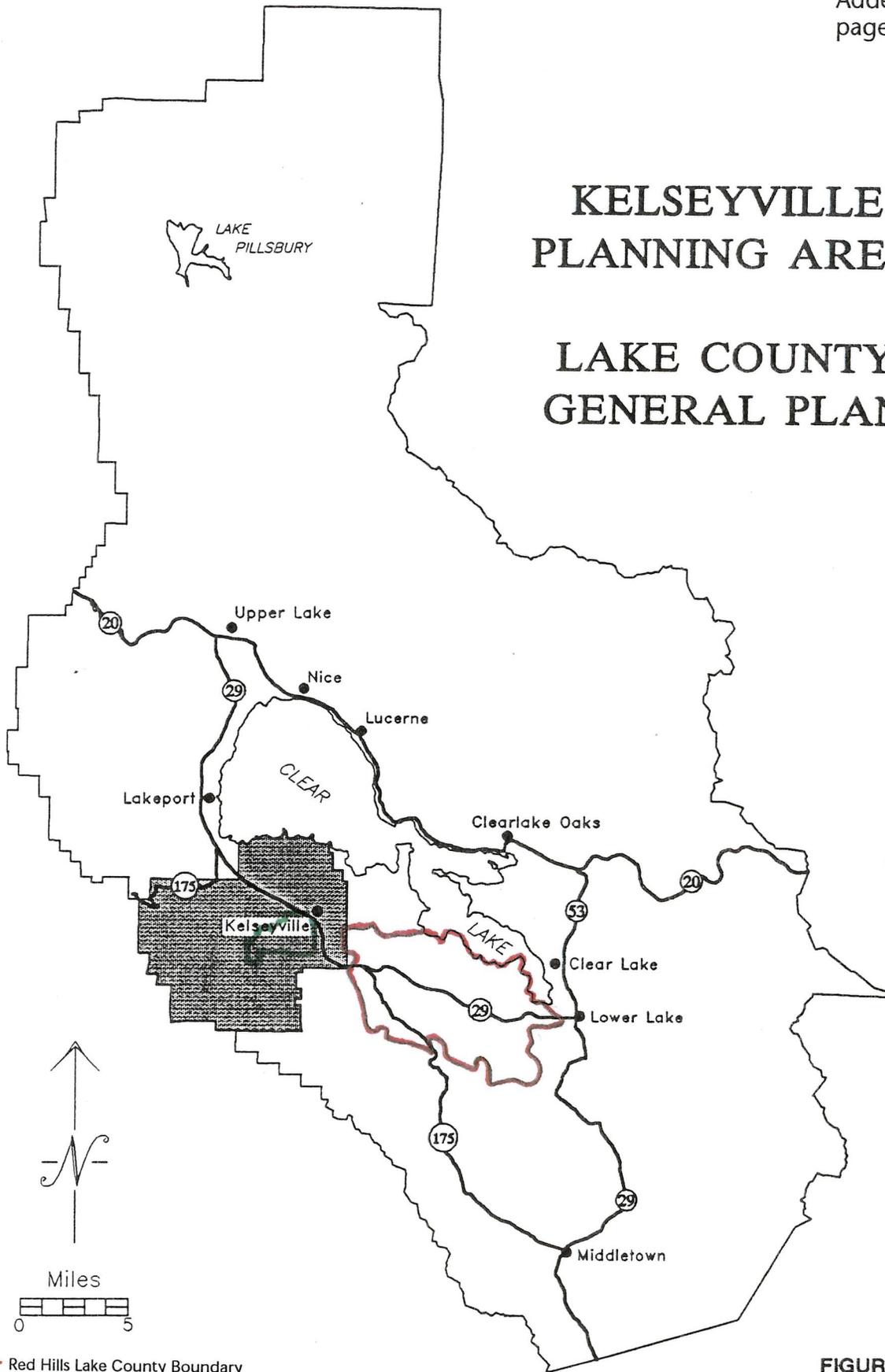
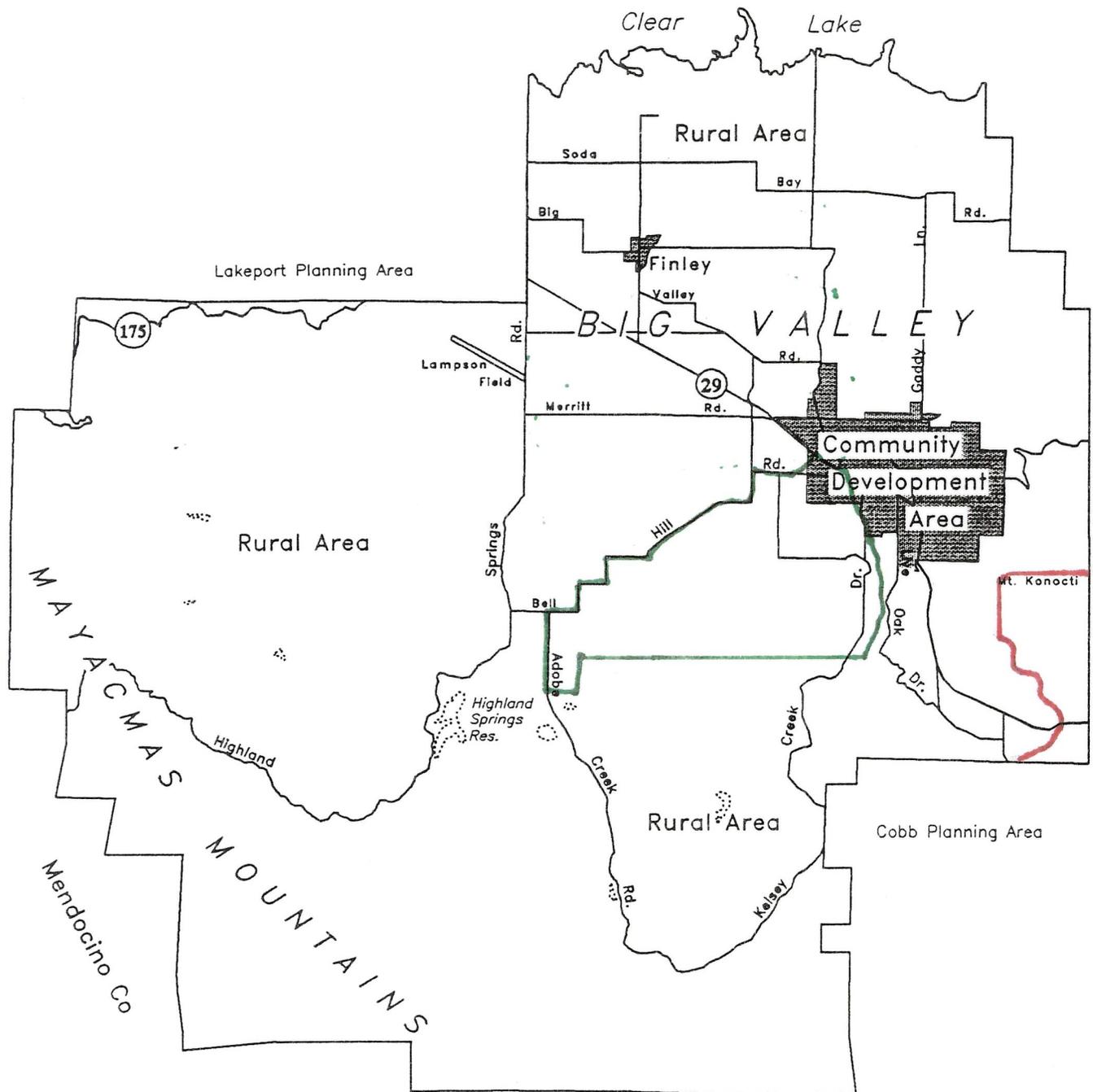


FIGURE 1

KELSEYVILLE AREA PLAN

Rural & Community Development Area



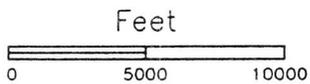
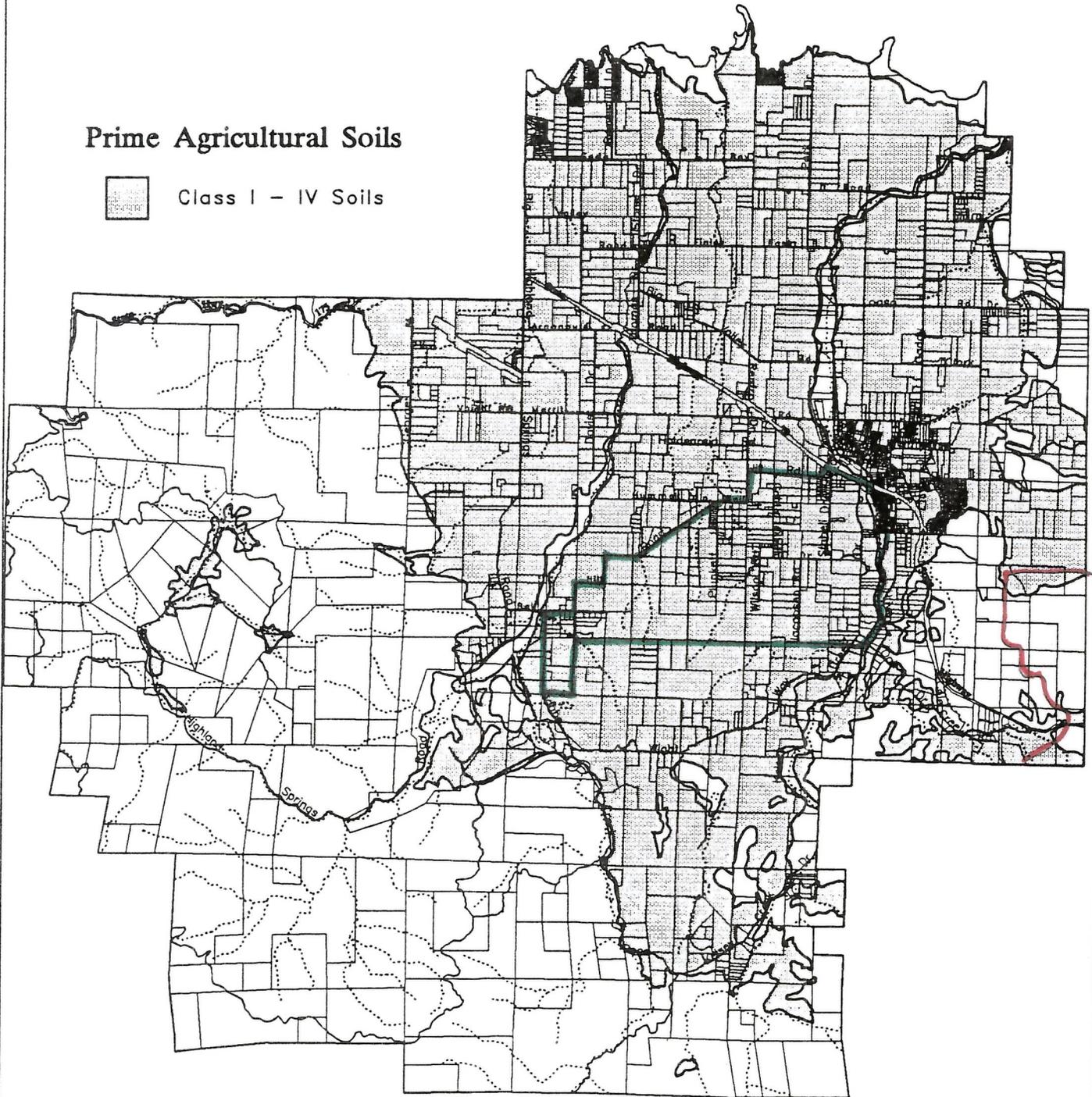
- Red Hills Lake County Boundary
- Comment Area Boundary

FIGURE 2

KELSEYVILLE AREA PLAN

Prime Agricultural Soils

 Class I - IV Soils



 Red Hills Lake County Boundary
 Comment Area Boundary

FIGURE 4

(Source: US Dept. of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service)