

2022 Application

Rock Creek Ranch

Amendment 3 to the Specific Plan

1. INTRODUCTION

Project Title: Rock Creek Ranch

Project Location: APN 026-330-002

Lead Agency: Mono County Planning Department

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Annex 1

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1.1 PURPOSE, STATEMENT AND ISSUES ADDRESSED

The purpose of the Rock Creek Ranch Specific Plan is to establish a formal link between implementing policies of the Mono County General Plan and the Rock Creek Ranch development proposal. This amended Specific Plan: (1) establishes all zoning regulations, (2) governs all public works project and development activity on the site, (3) sets forth the distribution, location and extent of land uses and essential facilities and utilities to serve the site, (4) defines the standards and criteria by which development will proceed, and (5) identifies specific measures and enforcement responsibilities for implementing all applicable regulations, programs, public works projects and financing activities.

1.2 PURPOSE OF THE SPECIFIC PLAN

A Specific Plan is a tool referenced in the California Government Code (CGC) for the systematic implementation of the general plan. Adoption of a Specific Plan is a legislative act, similar to adoption of a General Plan or zoning ordinance. Once adopted, the Specific Plan establishes a formal link between implementing policies of the general plan and the specific development proposal for a given area. CGC §65450-565457 requires that a Specific Plan be consistent with the adopted General Plan as well as any applicable Airport Land Use Plan. In turn, all subsequent site development, public works projects and zoning regulations must be consistent with provisions of the Specific Plan.

Within the context outlined above, the regulations contained in this Rock Creek Ranch Specific Plan provide for development of the Rock Creek Ranch in a manner that reflects the spirit and intent of the development regulations of the Mono County General Plan, which also represents zoning within Mono County. These regulations set forth in text and diagrams: (1) the distribution, location and extent of land uses including Open Space, (2) the distribution, location and extent of essential facilities and utilities to serve the site, including transportation and access roads, (3) the standards and criteria by which development will proceed including standards for the conservation, development and use of natural resources, (4) implementation measures including regulations, programs, public works project and financing measures to carry out Specific Plan elements, and (5) a clear statement of the relationship of this Specific Plan to the Mono County General Plan.

1.3 RELATIONSHIP OF THE SPECIFIC PLAN TO THE GENERAL PLAN

Like zoning, a Specific Plan must be consistent with the General Plan Land Use Element and, once adopted, becomes a part of the General Plan. The Specific Plan implements the General Plan Land Use Element by setting specific standards and regulations to govern permitted land uses, development, lot dimensions, parking, open space and all other uses proposed for the site. The Mono County General Plan Land Use Element provisions for Estate Residential development have served as a model for Rock Creek Ranch, although the Specific Plan also incorporates some changes from these source materials.

Consistency with provisions of the General Plan is ensured through subsequent Site Plan Review procedures established herein. The review process provides for county review of detailed plans for each lot in Rock Creek Ranch, and provides assurance that each lot will be planned, constructed and maintained in a manner that conforms to this Specific Plan and is compatible with the surrounding environs. In keeping with General Plan Land Use Element §02.1060, site plan review will occur as part of the building permit review process.

1.4 CONSISTENCY WITH THE SPECIFIC PLAN

All planning and development actions in Rock Creek Ranch are required to be consistent with the conditions outlined in this Specific Plan. This requirement applies to initial site preparation as well as subsequent development of the individual residential lot, roads, open space lands, utilities, and infrastructure improvements including the LRCMWC facilities located on this site but serving areas outside of Rock Creek Ranch. The Mono County General Plan requires, in §36.050, that land development projects close to one another must be considered jointly under a single plan so that cumulative effects can be assessed. During 2010, the Mono County Board of Supervisors approved the Rock Creek Canyon project, located on the site of the old Paradise Lodge and adjoining the western boundary of Rock Creek Ranch. The approved Specific Plan for Rock Creek Canyon contains a total of 14 parcels including twelve residential lots and two lots that will be available for public use (one for trailhead parking and one for permanent open space). As in previous similar situations (where one

adjacent submittal occurred much earlier than a later submittal), the county has conducted the joint review required by §36.050 as part of the Rock Creek Canyon EIR process for cumulative impacts.

2. PROJECT LOCATION

Rock Creek Ranch is proposed on a 54.7-acre parcel in the community of Paradise in southern Mono County. As a whole, Mono County is dominated by lands that are owned by the public and managed by various federal, state, and local entities: the General Plan estimates that approximately 94% of the county land area is publicly owned, including 88% that is managed by federal agencies. Mono County is surrounded by 5 counties including Inyo County to the south (the Inyo County line is about 1 mile south of the Rock Creek Ranch Specific Plan area), as well as Fresno, Madera, Calaveras, and Alpine Counties on the west. The entire eastern Mono County boundary adjoins the State of Nevada.

The project site, known to many as “East Ridge,” is a privately owned property located on unincorporated land. The site adjoins the old Paradise Resort & Restaurant, which is no longer in operation, and has been replaced with the Rock Creek Canyon Specific Plan of approximately 13 lots. Farther to the west and northwest are approximately 132 privately owned residential lots; the Paradise Fire Station is located about one-third mile to the northwest. There are no commercial enterprises in the community of Paradise. The project site fronts onto Lower Rock Creek Road, and is about 20 miles southeast of the Town of Mammoth Lakes, 15 miles northwest of the City of Bishop, 1 mile west of Highway 395, and 1 mile north of the Inyo/Mono County boundary.

The project site is currently undeveloped except for a graded (but not paved) access road, two wells (300 gpm), the Lower Rock Creek Mutual Water Company (LRCMWC) easements at the northwest border, and several former groundwater test well sites that were used to determine adequacy of onsite wells to meet project water demands. The LRCMWC easement is occupied by subsurface potable water storage tanks (110,000 gallons maximum), and distribution lines leading westward to existing homes in the community of Paradise to service approximately 145 shareholders. LRCMWC is solely responsible for all maintenance to their easements as well as access to their water cisterns on the parcel. The regional location and local area are depicted in Exhibits 3-1 (Regional Location Map), 3-2 (Local Vicinity Map), and 3-3 (Project Environs).

Currently, access to the parcel is via an unpaved “trail” through Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (DWP), and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) property. Both agencies have granted temporary permission for use of the unpaved trail during the development of the project. At the completion of the new driveway, the DWP and BLM will revoke that temporary permission.

2.1 BACKGROUND

The Rock Creek Ranch Specific Plan and Tentative Tract Map 37-56 were approved by the Mono County Board of Supervisors on May 12, 2009. The approved project allowed for the 54.64-acre property to be subdivided into 60 lots, which included five lots that were deed-restricted for affordable housing, and eleven lots that were deed-restricted for accessory dwelling units. All sixteen of the deed-restricted lots were provided in compliance with requirements of a Housing Mitigation Ordinance in effect at the time of project approval. In July of 2011 the Housing Mitigation Ordinance was suspended by the Mono County Board of Supervisors. The previous applicant entered into a Housing Mitigation Agreement with the Board of Supervisors on August 17 2012 that removed the requirement to provide the five deed-restricted affordable housing lots as well as the requirement for eleven lots to be deed-restricted for accessory dwelling units. A condition of the agreement required the applicant to amend the Tentative Tract Map and the Specific Plan to reflect the reduction of lots from 60 to 55. Specific Plan Amendment #1 was then

approved by the Board of Supervisors on May 7 2013. In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act, an addendum was prepared to address the project changes associated with Amendment #1.

During 2013, the previous applicant submitted an application for a second Specific Plan Amendment that would reduce the allowed lot number from 55 to 23, largely in response to recessionary economic conditions locally and across the country. The previous applicant determined that larger lots would be more responsive to residential market demands than the approved Specific Plan. Processing of the 23-lot Specific Plan Amendment #2 had been substantially completed, including a recommendation of approval by the Planning Commission, when it became apparent that Cal Fire had changed its position that the project complied with fire codes. Upon learning of Cal Fire’s revised position, the previous applicant initiated extensive adjustments that further reduced site development to a total of 10 lots. The approval of a second amendment to the Rock Creek Ranch Specific Plan occurred in 2014.

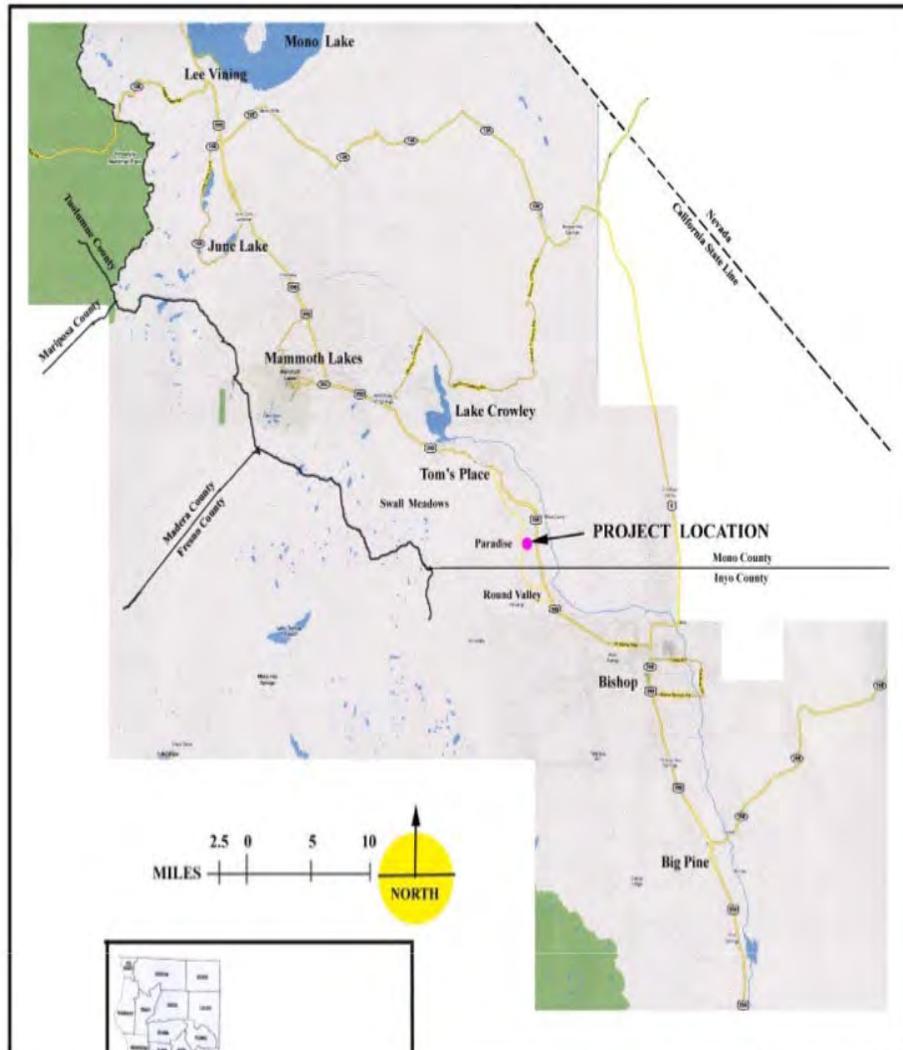
The current applicants wish to submit Specific Plan Amendment #3. The application to amend the 2014 Specific Plan proposes no subdivision of the property: the entire Homestead will comprise a single lot, which will further reduce development intensity from that identified for Amendment #2. The proposed Specific Plan Amendment #3 sets forth and governs all zoning regulations, land uses, public works and development activity on the project site for the revised map layout, Exhibit 3-4 (site plan).

2.2 SUMMARY COMPARISON OF PREVIOUS AND PROPOSED PLAN AMENDMENTS

Table 1 summarizes changes to the Specific Plan associated with proposed Amendment #3

Table 1- Revisions to the Rock Creek Ranch Proposed in Amendment #3

Specific Plan Feature	Original Specific Plan 2009	Specific Plan Amendment #1	Specific Plan Amendment #2	Specific Plan Amendment #3
Total number of lots	60	55	10	1
Total number of Affordable Lots	5	0	0	0
Number of required Secondary Units	11	0	0	0
Total Open Space Acreage	20.05	20.05	37.93	39.93 min
Common Area Recreation Lot Acreage	3.05	3.05	0	0
Primary Access Road ROW (not including cut and fill slopes)	4.98	4.98	1.91	0.69
Common Utility Acreage (Water, Sewer)	1.94	1.94	1.72	0.87
Total Disturbed Acreage maximum	16.01	16.01	13.18	12.32
Type of Sanitation System	Package Treatment	Package Treatment	Ind. Septic System	Ind Septic System
Water System Management	Maintenance District	Maintenance District	HOA Water Service	Private Well



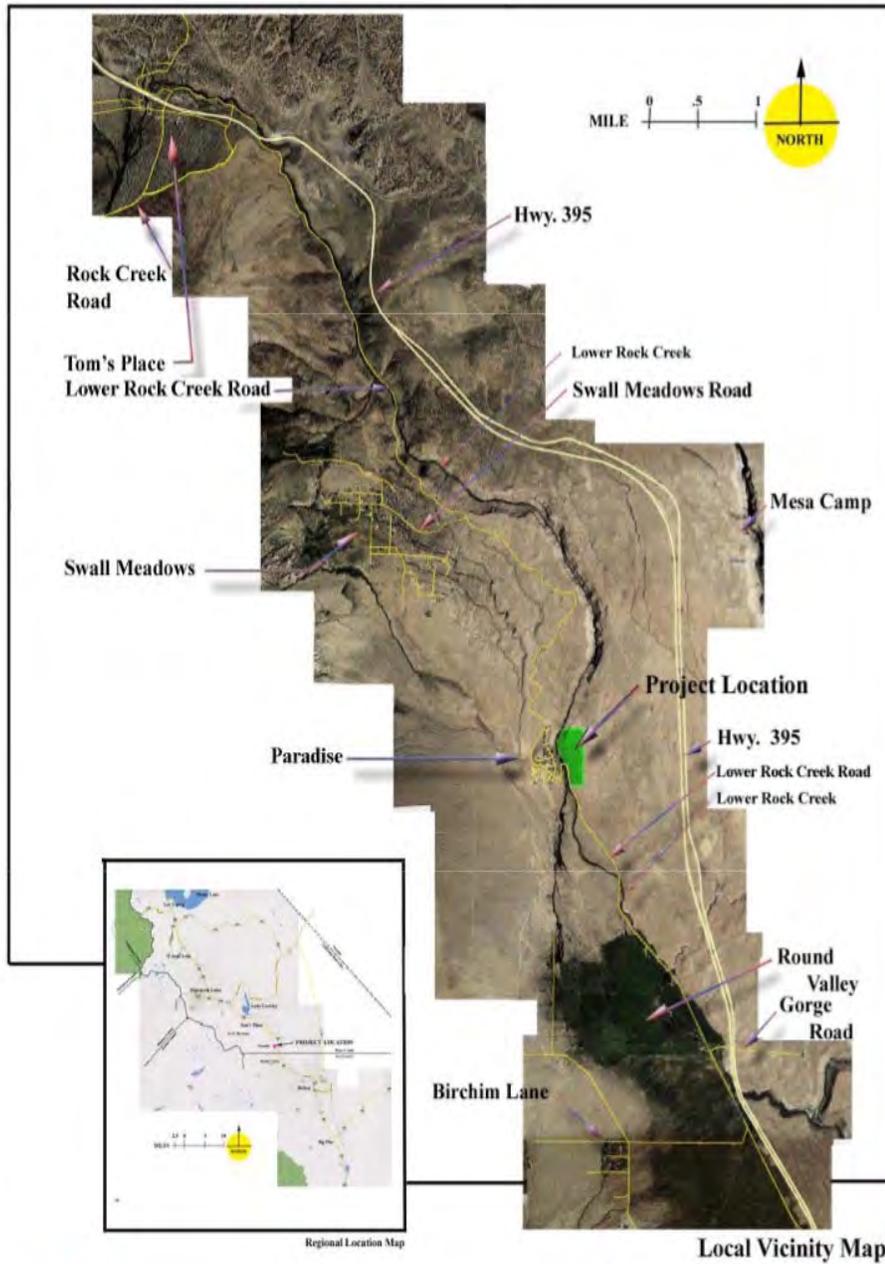
Regional Location Map



California Map

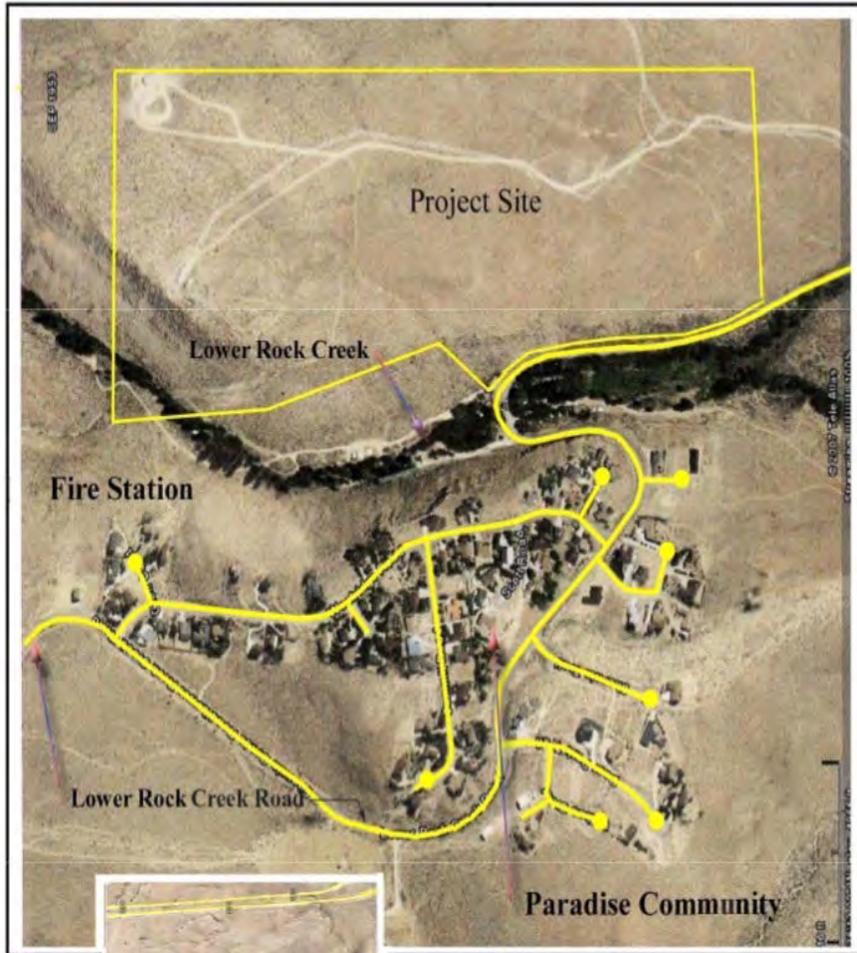


ROCK CREEK RANCH EIR
EXHIBIT 3-1



ROCK CREEK RANCH EIR
EXHIBIT 3-2

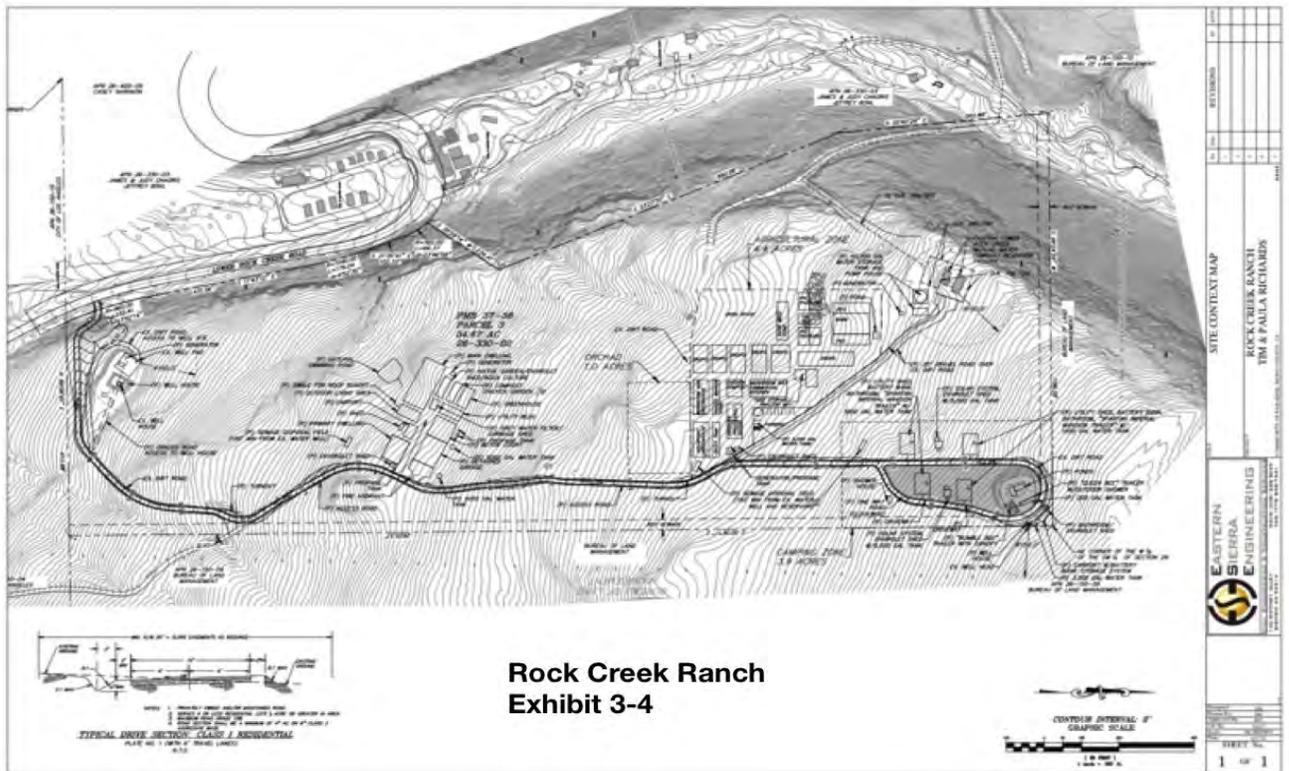




Project Location and Environs Map



ROCK CREEK RANCH EIR
EXHIBIT 3-3



3. THE PROJECT

3.1 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of the Rock Creek Ranch Specific Plan is to fulfill the General Plan’s vision for ultimate development of the Paradise community through a plan that protects the scenic, recreational and natural resources of the area while sustaining the small-town atmosphere and rural-residential character and quality of life that characterizes Mono County. An important secondary objective is to allow for enhanced reliability and fire safety to the parcel. The Paradise Fire Protection District has indicated to the County that it will provide fire protection services to the Rock Creek Ranch project.

3.2 NEW PROJECT OBJECTIVES IN AMENDMENT #3

- To reduce the intensity of use currently permitted by the existing Rock Creek Ranch Specific Plan 2014, and develop a single, self-sustaining Homestead based on Mono County ER Zone designation and consistent with 2014 Rock Creek Ranch Specific Plan of 10-lots as previously proposed.
- To provide opportunities for learning and study about various aspects of agriculture and self-sufficient homesteads.
- To create an innovative eco-conscious community for Paradise Estates and Mono County as a whole by example.

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- To provide for seasonal limited stays by invited guests/visitors who practice and/or study agroecology, agroforestry, bio-integrated small scale farms, homesteading, aquaponics and permaculture; and Agri-Tourism as adopted by Mono County in 1/18/2018.
 - To support the Goals, Objectives, Policy, and Concerns of the Paradise Community as part of the Mono County General Plan, including the following:¹
 - **GOAL 25.** Retain the natural, aesthetic, environmental and lifestyle qualities valued by residents as part of a rural community surrounded by healthy wildlands.
 - **Objective 25.A.** Protect and preserve the essential natural character and continuity of the community’s surrounding wildlands for their inherent value and the enjoyment of current and future generations.
 - **Policy 25.A.1.** Maintain the single-family residential development pattern (see the Rock Creek Ranch and Rock Creek Canyon specific plans).
 - **Policy 25.A.2.** Consistent with the Conservation/Open Space Element and in collaboration with natural resource management agencies, protect and maintain healthy ecosystems, habitats, and wildlife populations in the Paradise area.
 - **Policy 25.A.3.** Consistent with the Conservation/Open Space Element, protect significant historical and archeological sites from damage or destruction.
 - **Policy 25.A.4.** Collaborate with Caltrans to mitigate impacts of transportation projects on wildlife, consistent with the Regional Transportation Plan.
 - **Objective 25.B.** Retain a quiet, peaceful and tranquil residential atmosphere within the community.
 - **Policy 25.B.1.** Abate noise issues consistent with the Noise Element and County Code.
 - **Policy 25.B.2.** Prevent incompatible and/or conflicting uses within the community from non-residential uses.
 - **Objective 25.C.** Provide appropriate infrastructure and requirements to ensure public safety and service capacity.
 - **Policy 25.C.1.** Support the protection of water quality and supply by collaborating with the Lower Rock Creek Mutual Water Company.
 - **Policy 25.C.2.** Protect local air quality consistent with the Conservation/Open Space Element.
 - **Policy 25.C.3.** Explore the need to identify and protect public viewsheds.
 - **Policy 25.C.4.** Support wildland fire preparedness and community fire safety efforts by implementing State Law and Chapter 22, Fire Safe Regulations, of the Land Use Element; routing building permits to the local fire district for review; and consulting with Cal Fire.
 - **Policy 25.C.5.** Ensure housing units are constructed to a similar standard as existing housing through building permits subject to the California Building Code and County regulations.

¹ <https://www.monocounty.ca.gov/generalplan/paradise-0>.

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- **Objective 25.D.** Provide for safe recreational facilities that support the local tourist economy and quality of life.
 - **Policy 25.D.1.** Support the policies in the Regional Transportation Plan to improve the transportation network and system.
 - **Policy 25.D.2.** Work with the community to identify other potential transportation projects and needs, such as traffic calming, signage and wayfinding, parking, and pedestrian infrastructure.
 - **Policy 25.D.3.** Support efforts to improve infrastructure for recreationalists that improves the experience, and reduces impacts to the environment and residents, such as public restrooms at trail heads.
 - **Policy 25.D.4.** Explore funding opportunities for projects.
- Other considerations, per the General Plan Land Use Element, p. II-19:
 - A concern in the Paradise community is preserving the aesthetic beauty and tranquility of the area while still allowing for development of privately owned parcels. The focus of development is to be single-family residential development.
 - The Paradise area contains vital deer wintering and migration habitat, as well as other species and habitat of concern, such as the Sierra Nevada Bighorn Sheep.
 - There is a need to maintain the rural, single-family residential character of the neighborhood while also facilitating the maintenance of a structure's defensible space for wildland fire protection purposes.
 - Recreation access and management are of concern to the residents.
 - Residents are interested in providing an improved transportation system that protects and accesses the unique scenic, recreational and environmental resources of the area. Alternative transportation systems, both within the community area and linking the area to other communities in the region, are a major concern.

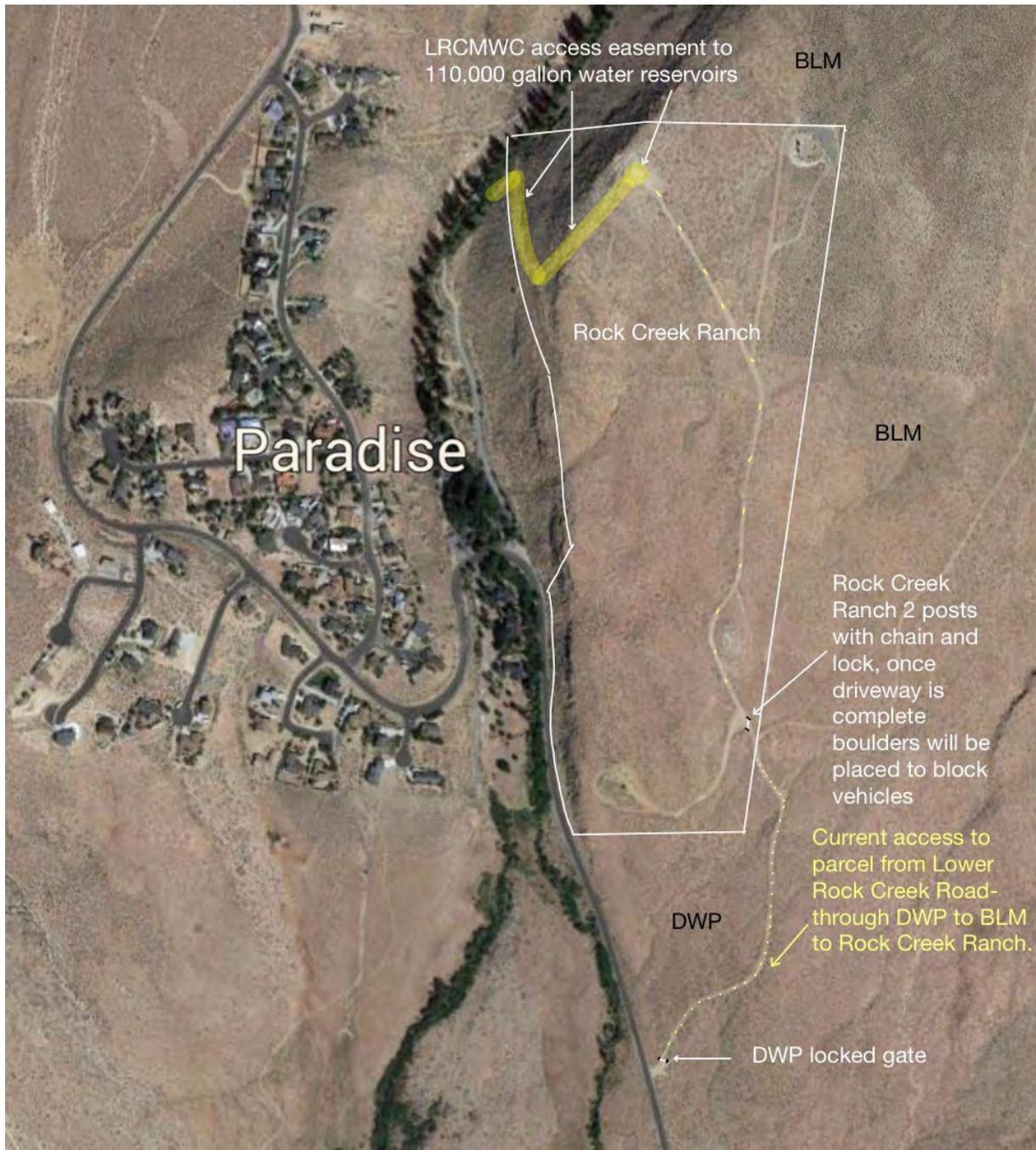
3.3 PHASING

The applicant proposes to complete all site improvements in a single phase. Improvements would include grading of roads and infrastructure improvements to develop on-site water and drainage systems, and installation of other utility systems (power, communication, etc.). The applicant has prepared a timeline in which grading would be initiated approximately six months following approval of Specific Plan Amendment #3 by the Mono County Board of Supervisors, and construction of the single residential lot would be undertaken upon completion of grading. Permitted land uses on the parcel would be governed by the Specific Plan provisions herein. Any proposed change to the approved site uses would require County approval of an amendment to the Specific Plan, including additional environmental documentation if and as required to comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

3.4 LAND USES.

Table 1 provides a summary profile of the allowed disturbance areas within Rock Creek Ranch, including land to be set aside for infrastructure improvements; note that all acreages herein are estimates, and may be slightly modified as the detailed utility specifications and design plans are finalized during plan check reviews. An estimated 0.69 acres will be used for road improvements (including cut and fill slopes), 1.72 0.82 acres will be set aside for water improvements, and the allowed residential disturbance area will total approximately 12.32 acres of land. Private open space (defined as the acreage outside of the allowed disturbance area on each lot) will represent a total of 39.93 acres, compared with 20.05 acres in the approved 60-lot Specific Plan.

Exhibit 3-5



Rock Creek Ranch regulations and ordinances are based on Mono County Zone Estate Residential (ER) with some slight alterations. The project is intended to permit a large-lot, single-family dwelling unit with ancillary rural uses in areas adjacent to developed communities, and small-scale agriculture. The following uses are permitted in Rock Creek Ranch subject to site plan review and approval of a Building Permit.

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Primary Access Road ROW (not including cut and fill slopes)	4.98	4.98	1.91	0.69
Common Utility Acreage (Water, Sewer)	1.94	1.94	1.72	0.87
Total Disturbed Acreage maximum	16.01	16.01	13.18	12.32
Type of Sanitation System	Package Treatment	Package Treatment	Ind. Septic System	Ind Septic System
Water System Management	Maintenance District	Maintenance District	HOA Water Service	Private Well

3.4.1 Permitted Uses

- Single-family dwelling
- Small-scale agriculture
- Accessory buildings and uses
- Animals and pets (see Animal Standards Section 04.270)
- Home occupations (see Home Occupation regulations, Section 04.290) Accessory Dwelling Unit (as prescribed in Chapter 16, Development Standards – Accessory Dwelling Unit)
- Transitional and Supportive Housing

3.4.2 Uses Permitted Subject to Director Review

The following uses shall be permitted subject to review by the Mono County Planning Director:

- Accessory Structures: Construction of an accessory structure prior to construction of the main building.
- Other: Any other use that is found by the Planning Commission to be compatible with the purpose and objectives of this Specific Plan.

3.4.3 Development Standards-

- a. Minimum Parcel Size: 1 acre
- b. Minimum Lot Dimensions: 200,000 square feet net.
- c. Maximum Lot Coverage: 25%
- d. Minimum Setbacks: Front- 50', Rear-30', Side 30'
- e. Building Density: 1 du/lot and an Accessory Dwelling Unit (see Ch. 16, Development Standards – Accessory Dwelling Units).
- f. Population Density: Maximum population density is 5.02 persons per five acres or approximately one person per acre.

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- g. Maximum Building Height: 35'
 - h. Open Space: Open space uses, including trails and paths, subject to Regulations in §V.H.
 - i. Water Facilities: Private Well/Water facilities, subject to the Regulations of §V.H.2.
 - j. Solar: Private solar energy systems, subject to the Regulations of §V.D.k.
 - k. Maximum Landscape Coverage: 15% of lot acreage, landscape area may not exceed or extend outside of the allowed disturbance area on any lot.
 - l. Fencing:
 - i. All fencing on residential lots shall be constructed of wood materials.
 - ii. Fencing shall be permitted only inside the allowed disturbance area designated for each lot.
 - iii. The maximum fenced area shall not exceed 20% of the land inside the allowed disturbance area on each lot.
 - iv. All residential fencing shall be a maximum of 5 feet high and constructed of three wood rails. Rock may be used only on the fencing posts. 'Trex'-type lumber may be used, but all-plastic lumber shall not be permitted. Pet fencing shall be within the confines of the maximum fenced area allowed herein, and shall consist of a wire mesh incorporated into the 3 wood rails allowed herein.
 - v. Fencing for water systems shall be adequately screened and constructed of materials and dimensions as required for safety and security.
 - vi. Fencing shall not be placed so as to restrict access to public lands, and fencing shall not block any extensions of right-of-way easements or non-motorized bike or pedestrian paths that extend through to public lands.
 - vii. Pet Restraints: The project is subject to leash requirements intended to minimize impacts on important deer habitat. The leash requirements obligate owners to ensure that pets are leashed or restrained with fencing at all times when out of doors. Dog enclosures must be designed so as to prevent the dog(s) from straying onto public land or adjacent properties. Pet fencing shall be within the confines of the fenced area allowed in this section (i.e., the maximum fenced area, and any associated pet fencing, shall not exceed 20% of the land inside the allowed disturbance area on each lot), and constructed with materials allowed in this section. Such fencing shall incorporate a wire mesh into the 3 wood rails allowed in §l.iv above.
 - viii. Fencing shall be prohibited in any open space area (but not including the water facilities, which may be fenced subject to provisions set forth herein).
 - m. Deer Protection: Parcel grading operations, structural foundation work, framing work and similar heavy construction activities shall be restricted to the period between May 15 and October 1 to minimize disturbance to migrating and wintering deer.
 - n. Biological Resource Protection: Domestic animals shall at all times when outdoors be restrained with fencing or leashes and kept under owner control. Under no circumstances shall domestic animals be allowed to roam freely.
 - o. Best Management Practices (BMPs): BMPs shall be utilized in the construction of each individual home site to minimize or prevent erosion, sedimentation, and contamination. BMPs shall comply with the special conditions outlined in §5.3 of the Rock Creek Ranch Draft EIR and shall also include: (1) short-term storage of all construction wastes areas outside the path of storm flows and disposal at a permitted transfer station or landfill; (2) minimizing the footprint of construction zones and prompt installation of erosion controls; (3) stabilizing disturbed soils with landscaping, paving or reseeding to reduce or eliminate the risk of further erosion; perimeter drainage controls to direct runoff around disturbed construction areas; (5) internal erosion controls to allow direct percolation of sediment-laden waters on the construction site; and (6) regular inspection and maintenance of all equipment used during construction.

3.4.4 Landscaping and Screening-

- **Plant Materials:** Landscaping within Rock Creek Ranch shall consist solely of plant materials that are native to the Mono County region and have value to native wildlife, and non-native species that are compatible with native plant materials, have low propagation characteristics, are drought tolerant, and are not invasive .
- **Landscape Irrigation:** Permanent irrigation on residential lots shall be limited to a maximum 15% of lot area, except that the irrigated landscape area may not exceed or extend outside of the allowed disturbance area on any lot. Water conserving irrigation systems are required on all residential lots to minimize irrigation water demand.
- **Protections for Native Vegetation:** Property owners shall be prohibited from clearing native vegetation except as shown on the approved landscape plan submitted for the lot, subject to current laws and regulations concerning fire safety and habitat protection.

3.4.5 Building Materials and Colors-

- **Roofs:** Roofs must meet county fire codes and must be made of non-reflective material except when using fully integrated solar roofing. Acceptable roofing types include Green Roof, Comp Shingle, corrugated metal (dark or rust), dark tile, slate and shake if fireproof. Sky lighting is acceptable if integrated into the roof. Solar panels that rise more than 5 inches above the roof plane are not acceptable .
- **Driveways:** All driveways shall be paved with materials that are typical to the area, such as concrete, pavers, asphalt, brick and stone. Use of ‘turf stone’ and/or other runoff-reducing materials is encouraged.
- **Siding:** All siding materials shall meet current fire and building codes. Gabion, wood, engineered composite wood (i.e. Hardi), shake, shingle, log, timber, stone, brick, and steel (i.e. rusted corrugated metal) are all examples of allowable type siding. Vinyl, lapboard, and other siding with seams are not acceptable. Stucco should be limited to 25% of the total siding.
- **Home styles:** Homes must be built of conventional wood and/or steel methods including log or timber. Mountain, ranch, modern mountain rustic ranch, and craftsman style architecture is encouraged as well as use of environmentally "green" materials and concepts (i.e., passive solar and water conservation techniques).
- **Color Themes:** This project will limit the color palette of the future home to natural tones that will be compatible with native soil and plant materials on the site . The primary colors should include earth tones such as Greens, Browns, Tans, Brownish Reds, Dark Grays, natural woods, natural stains and other colors that are compatible and blend with the natural surroundings. Natural and wood-colored stains are acceptable.

3.4.6 Lighting Standards-

- All outdoor lighting within the Rock Creek Ranch project shall comply with requirements set forth in Chapter 23 of the Mono County Code, the Dark Sky Ordinance.
- **Lighting:** Lighting shall be prohibited in the open space areas (but not including the water facilities, which may have lighting as allowed therein).

3.4.7 Open Space Development Standards-

- Plant materials in the open space areas shall be limited to existing native plants. Where replanting is necessary due to disturbance during construction, the landscaping shall be limited to plant materials that are native to the Mono County region and have value to native wildlife.

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- Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Use: OHVs shall be permitted, used for maintenance, emergency or public safety purposes shall be permitted.

3.4.8 Infrastructure Development Standards-

- Private roads shall meet or exceed minimum Fire Safe Standards and shall provide for an appropriate maintenance entity.
- The interior driveway serving Rock Creek Ranch shall have a minimum overall width of 20'.
- The primary interior driveway serving Rock Creek Ranch shall have one public access onto Lower Rock Creek Road.
- Interior slopes on the primary access road shall not exceed a maximum grade of 15.0%.
- Driveways shall be paved and designed to minimize grades so that year-round access is assured and on-street parking avoided.
- The owners shall store any and all RV units, boats, trailers, ATVs, snowmobiles and similar items in a fully-enclosed structure that is integrated with the residential structure, or in a carport structure that conforms to the design of the primary residence.
- To warn motorists of potential traffic exiting out of the project access road, a 'W-2- 2' side street warning sign shall be installed approximately 180 feet in advance of the access road for each traffic direction of Lower Rock Creek Rd.
- Sign standards for the internal driveway serving Rock Creek Ranch shall be the same as required for rural residential roads.
- Individual water production wells shall be the water system in Rock Creek Ranch.
- Water production, storage and delivery facilities shall be concealed from view through underground construction, berms and use of materials that conform to the architectural standards and colors outlined in this Specific Plan. The colors used shall be taken from the darkest colors of the surrounding landscape.
- Lighting at the water production and storage facilities shall be limited to motion sensor lighting as required for security.
- Standards: The interior driveway shall be constructed with a minimum three-foot wide rock-lined roadside and shall include culverts fitted with flared end sections, drop inlets, and other drainage structures as necessary to collect and convey storm waters generated by the 20-year event.
- Discharges: Storm water quantities exceeding pre development levels shall be retained on-site. The off-site discharge of any pre-development flow quantities shall be routed through a sediment basin prior to discharge.
- All drainage facilities shall be managed and maintained by the owners.
- Standards: The project shall include a provision that any commercial waste disposal receptacles provided for long-term residential use (i.e., rather than one-time construction use) shall be stored in bear-proof bins enclosed within a three-sided enclosure equipped with a gate (to provide visual screening). Structure design and construction materials shall conform to standards established by this Specific Plan.
- SCE provides electricity to the project region. Onsite power lines will be placed below-grade.
- Gas service to Rock Creek Ranch lots shall be served through individual propane tanks.
- Location of Propane tank: Each propane tank shall be located in accordance with county regulations and screened from off-site view by approved vegetation or fencing . Fuel distribution lines shall be constructed underground.
- Propane tanks shall be maintained by the propane provider; no easement will be required.
- Any individual propane tank shall be screened from view from the scenic highway. The design and construction materials of such screening shall conform to Fire Department standards for public safety as well as the standards established by this Specific Plan.

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- Excepting solar panels, exterior components of plumbing, processing, heating, cooling and ventilation systems, and transformers shall not be visible from any street or highway.
 - With the exception of individual TV satellite antennas (which are exempt), dishes, transmitters and antennas shall be allowed. Where permitted, such features shall be placed within the height limits described above, and shall be wholly screened from view by architecturally compatible landscaped berms, plantings, walls, solid fencing, or a combination of these materials.
 - Except as otherwise provided in this Specific Plan, no toxic materials handling shall be permitted within Rock Creek Ranch except for small quantities of domestic products that are available in retail outlets. Such permitted uses shall comply with all relevant laws and regulations governing use, storage and disposal.
 - Owners shall be prohibited from installing wood-burning appliances (including fireplaces) that do not comply with current standards for control of particulate emissions.
 - All structures in Rock Creek Ranch shall comply with current requirements of the Paradise Fire Protection District for structural fire protection.
 - Unless otherwise noted herein, all sign provisions in Rock Creek Ranch, including permitted and prohibited signage, shall be governed by provisions in General Plan Land Use Element Chapter 7 (page II-327).

3.4.9 Capital Improvement Plans

Project improvement costs, exclusive of land acquisition, are estimated by the project applicant to be \$4,197,500. Cost components include \$1.2 million for earthwork and erosion control, \$600,000 for paving, \$200,000 for drainage improvements, \$950,000 for water improvements, \$700,000 for underground utilities, and a 15% contingency reserve of \$547,500. Private financing will cover the cost of most project improvements. Submissions of grant applications are pending the approval of the proposed amendment application.

4. REVIEW UNDER CEQA

As described above, the County certified a Final EIR in 2008 for the Specific Plan (available at: <https://www.monocounty.ca.gov/planning/page/rock-creek-ranch-specific-plan-draft-eir-and-final-eir-2008>). The County subsequently prepared an addendum to that Final EIR for the various amendments to the Specific Plan, as each amendment reduced the development intensity of the originally approved plan (addendum available at: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1_0wAUw5MeWnP1l_D1wzubMhQZOPU-p4z/view?usp=sharing).

4.1 APPLICABLE STANDARD

As described above in Table 1, Proposed Amendment #3 further reduces development intensity on the property and, consequently, the potential environmental effects associated with development.

Section 15164(a) of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines states:

“The lead agency or a responsible agency shall prepare an addendum to a previously certified EIR if some changes or additions are necessary but none of the conditions described in Section 15162 calling for the subsequent EIR have occurred.”

In turn, CEQA Guidelines §15162 states that preparation of a subsequent EIR should not occur unless one or more of the following occurs:

-
- Substantial changes are proposed in the project which will require major revisions of the previous EIR or negative declaration due to the involvement of new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects.
 - Substantial changes occur with respect to the circumstances under which the project is undertaken which will require major revisions of the previous EIR or negative declaration due to the involvement of new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects.
 - New information of substantial importance, which was not known and could not have been known with the exercise of reasonable diligence at the time the previous EIR was certified as complete shows any of the following:
 - A. The project will have one or more significant effects not discussed in the previous EIR or negative declaration.
 - B. Significant effects previously examined will be substantially more severe than shown in the previous EIR.
 - C. Mitigation measures or alternatives previously found not to be feasible would in fact be feasible, and would substantially reduce one or more significant effects of the project, but the project proponents decline to adopt the mitigation measure or alternative.
 - D. Mitigation measures or alternatives which are considerably different from those analyzed in the previous EIR would substantially reduce one or more significant effects on the environment, but the project proponents decline to adopt the mitigation measure or alternative.

4.2 SIGNIFICANT UNAVOIDABLE IMPACTS IDENTIFIED IN ROCK CREEK RANCH 2008 FINAL EIR AND 2014 ADDENDUM, AND COMPARISON TO PROPOSED AMENDMENT #3

The conclusions of the Final EIR and the addenda with respect to significant unavoidable impacts are summarized in Table 2, below, and compared to those anticipated for proposed Amendment #3. Table 3 provides a comparison of the potential significant impacts of the Final EIR and addenda.

Table 2

SIGNIFICANT UNAVOIDABLE IMPACTS IDENTIFIED IN ROCK CREEK RANCH FINAL EIR	AMENDMENT #2 ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANT UNAVOIDABLE IMPACTS	AMENDMENT #3 ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANT UNAVOIDABLE IMPACTS
<p>Results of the analyses contained in the 2008 Final EIR for the Rock Creek Ranch project indicated that project implementation would have potentially significant and unavoidable adverse direct and cumulative environmental impacts on the following resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Critical mule deer habitat ■ Mule deer movement along a regional migration corridor of which the project is a part, and ■ Visual quality and visual unity of views from Lower Rock Creek Road, some points along the Highway 395 scenic corridor, and portions of the community of Paradise 	<p>The changes proposed with Amendment #2 were reviewed by Dr. James Paulus to assess the effect of Amendment #2 on the significant environmental impacts identified in 2008.</p> <p>Dr. Paulus indicated that there are no changes in the overall status of the relevant species or environmental factors that would necessitate reevaluation of the potential changes to biological resources</p> <p>Shift from a larger number of smaller lots to fewer relatively large lots would be a net benefit for wildlife and habitat</p> <p>Impacts to views from Lower Rock Creek Road, points along the Highway 395 scenic corridor, and portions of the community of Paradise would all be reduced as a result of the substantial reduction in overall density, number of units, and infrastructure improvements</p>	<p>No new impacts have been identified, nor are there substantial changes in the circumstances within which the project will be undertaken. In summary, the proposed Specific Plan Amendment #3 would reduce the scope and severity of the significant and unavoidable adverse impacts identified in the 2008 EIR for the Rock Creek Ranch development.</p>

Table 3

COMPARISON OF POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS FOR ADOPTED SPECIFIC PLAN & PROPOSED SPECIFIC PLAN AMENDMENT #3	
IMPACT OF CURRENT PROJECT IMPACT OF PROPOSED AMENDMENT #3 SOILS AND HYDROLOGY	
IMPACT WQ 5.1-1: The Project will place increased demands on groundwater resources.	Reduced Impact: The reduction in number of units from 10 to 1 will place fewer demands on groundwater resources than the approved plan.
IMPACTWQ 5.1-3: The Quality of the Groundwater Supply Meets Applicable Standards but may require further testing.	No change. The project will fulfill all requirements for an private well.
IMPACT GEO 5.1-4: Earthwork activities and long-term use of the site would pose a risk of erosion & sedimentation and a loss of permeable soils due to grading and construction activities.	Reduced Impact: Approval of proposed Amendment #3 would substantially reduce earthwork requirements: Earthwork estimates for the 10-lot layout include 8,500 cy of cut and 8,100 cy of fill. The new driveway design for the 1-lot and architectural designs will be engineered to minimize cut and fill.
IMPACT GEO 5.1-5: Project would be exposed to seismic & volcanic hazards; the risk of tsunami, seiche, liquefaction, land- slide & avalanche would be less than significant.	No change. The risk of seismic and volcanic hazards would be unchanged with Amendment #3; the project population exposed to such risks would, however, be reduced.
IMPACT BOT 5.2-2a: Invasive species may be introduced as a result of project implementation.	13. Reduced Impact: The current 1 lot layout reduces the allowed total disturbance area from 13.18 acres to 12.32 max. which will reduce by equivalent acreage the potential for impacts associated with invasive species.
IMPACT BOT 5.2-2b: Invasive species may replace native habitat as a result of spray irrigation of open space with tertiary treated effluent from the package treatment plant	Eliminated Impact: This impact will be avoided altogether due to elimination of the package treatment plant.
WILDLIFE RESOURCES	
IMPACT WILD 5.3-1: Project implementation would result in the loss of native communities and wild life.	Reduced Impact: The decrease in the allowed total disturbance area (from 13.18 acres to 12.32 max) will reduce by equivalent acreage the potential for loss of native communities & wildlife.
IMPACT WILD 5.3-4: Project implementation would interfere with migration patterns of the Round Valley Deer Herd.	Reduced Impact: Based on Specific Plan provisions for fencing, it is estimated that the maximum length of fencing would be reduced
LAND USES, RECREATION & RELEVANT PLANNING	
IMPACT LU 5.5-1a: Project conflicts with Land Use Element Policy to conserve critical habitat.	Reduced Impact: The decrease in the allowed total disturbance area (from 13.18 to 12.32 max acres) will reduce by equivalent acreage the potential for conflicts with Land Use Element policy to conserve critical habitat.
IMPACT LU 5.5-1b: Project may conflict with Land Use Element Policy to annex into existing service districts.	No change. There is no change in the determination that it is infeasible for Rock Creek Ranch to annex into this existing water service district.
PUBLIC SERVICES AND UTILITIES	
Reduced Impact: The decreased number of units (from 55 to 10) will reduce demands on fire protection services.	Further Reduced Impact: The decreased number of units (from 10 to 1) will reduce demands on fire protection.
Eliminated Impact: This impact will be avoided due to elimination of the propane tank farm.	No change
Reduced Impact: The reduced number of units (from 55 to 10) will have fire flow demands lower.	Further Reduced Impact: The decreased number of units (from 10 to 1) will have fire flow demands lower.
Reduced Impact: Construction-related use of hazardous materials will be lower with the proposed 10-lot plan than with the approved 55-lot plan.	Further Reduced Impact: Construction-related use of hazardous materials will be lower with proposed 1-lot plan

TRAFFIC AND CIRCULATION	
Reduced Impact: Construction traffic impacts will be lower with term congestion & roadway hazards with plan (from 55 lots to 10)	Reduced Impact: Construction traffic impacts will be lower with term congestion & roadway hazards with plan (from 10 to 1 lot)
AIR QUALITY	
Reduced Impact: Construction-related emissions will be lower with the proposed 10-lot plan than with the approved 55-lot plan.	Reduced Impact: Construction-related emissions will be lower with the proposed 1-lot plan than with the approved 10-lot plan.
Reduced impact: Greenhouse gas emissions will be lower with the proposed 10-lot plan than with the approved 55-lot plan.	Reduced impact: Greenhouse gas emissions will be lower with the proposed 1-lot plan than with the approved 10-lot plan.
Eliminated Impact: This impact will be avoided altogether by elimination of the package treatment plant.	
Eliminated Impact: This impact will be avoided altogether by the elimination of the package treatment plant.	
AESTHETIC RESOURCES	
Reduced impact: Project impacts on scenic views from Lower Rock Creek Road and Highway 395 will be lower with the proposed 10-lot plan than with the approved 55-lot plan.	Reduced impact: Project impacts on scenic views from Lower Rock Creek Road and Highway 395 will be lower with the proposed 1-lot plan than with the approved 10-lot plan.
Reduced impact: Project impacts on aesthetic values in the existing Paradise community will be lower with the proposed 10-lot plan than with the approved 55-lot plan.	Reduced impact: Project impacts on aesthetic values in the existing Paradise community will be lower with the proposed 1-lot plan than with the approved 10-lot plan.
Reduced impact: Project impacts on dark sky visibility will be lower with the proposed 10-lot plan than with the approved 55-lot plan.	Reduced impact: Project impacts on dark sky visibility will be lower with the proposed 1-lot plan than with the approved 10-lot plan.
Reduced impact: The amount of glare from windows and solar panels will be lower with the proposed 10-lot plan than with the approved 55-lot plan.	Reduced impact: The amount of glare from windows and solar panels will be lower with the proposed 1-lot plan than with the approved 10-lot plan.

5. EXISTING SETTING

5.1 PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

The site is currently undeveloped. Vegetation includes a riparian corridor along Lower Rock Creek that occupies about one-half acre of land in the northwestern-most portion of the property. The majority of the site is xeric, with desert scrub vegetation. Most of the project site supports a contiguous stand of open scrub vegetation that is classified as High Desert Blackbush Scrub. Big Sagebrush Scrub can be found on thin strips of terrain west of the Lower Rock Creek riparian zone and between the base of the steep slope and Lower Rock Creek Road. The relatively small portion of the study area that is immediately adjacent to Lower Rock Creek is classified as Water Birch Riparian Scrub. The natural communities form the basis of wildlife habitats on the site, which include mourning dove, Steller’s jay, white-crowned sparrow, common raven, northern flicker, and black-tailed jackrabbit. Evidence of coyote and mule deer was found throughout the site, and several bat species are known to occur in the immediate vicinity including fringed myotis, long-legged myotis, Yuma myotis, little brown bat, and spotted bat. The archeological report concludes that there are no significant cultural resources on the site.

The site also contains an unpaved access road on the southeast boundary adjacent to BLM property. Currently, access to the parcel from Lower Rock Creek Rd crosses DWP and BLM property on an

unpaved trail. One condition from 2014 Specific Plan is this access point will be blocked once access to the parcel has been built. There is an informal trail to Lower Rock Creek created by the LRCMWC easements. There are granitic rocks and small boulders, and a number of rock mounds and soil pits created during prior soil and percolation testing activities. No prior formal uses of the site have been recorded, nor have any formal development applications been filed with the county prior to the initial application submitted by C&L Development in 2003.

Offsite drainage enters the site from up-gradient areas on the north and east. Drainage then crosses the site as sheet flow, exiting to the south and west. There are no distinct drainage swales or ditches on the site. The tributary area is estimated to be about 18-acres, and the total historic contribution to runoff from the site during a 25-year storm is calculated to be 25.76 cubic feet per second (cfs). The site is located outside of any designated flood zone and there are no defined natural drainage courses on the buildable portion of the site; Rock Creek flows through the northwestern-most portion of the site, and is designated in the Specific Plan as an open space area.

5.2 LAND USE AND ZONING

The parcel is zoned SP/ER. Like zoning, a Specific Plan must be consistent with the General Plan Land Use Element and, once adopted, becomes a part of the General Plan. The Specific Plan implements the General Plan Land Use Element by setting specific standards and regulations to govern permitted land uses, future subdivision, lot dimensions, parking, open space and all other uses proposed for the site. The Mono County General Plan Land Use Element provisions for Estate Residential development have served as a model for Rock Creek Ranch, although the Specific Plan also incorporates some changes from these source materials.

Consistency with provisions of the General Plan is ensured through subsequent Site Plan Review procedures established herein. The review process provides for county review of detailed plans for each lot in Rock Creek Ranch, and provides assurance that each lot will be planned, constructed and maintained in a manner that conforms to this Specific Plan and is compatible with the surrounding environs. In keeping with General Plan Land Use Element §02.1060, site plan review will occur as part of the building permit review process.

5.3 EASEMENTS ON ROCK CREEK RANCH

The following easements have been recorded on the project site prior to development of Rock Creek Ranch and may affect all or part of the property:

5.3.1 Southern California Edison Company (SCE)

An easement for existing underground or aerial electric and communication lines to SCE per 101/172 O.R.

5.3.2 Lower Rock Creek Mutual Water Company

An easement for water pipelines and incidental purposes, reservoir, and pumping plant system to Lower Rock Creek Mutual Water Company per 107/16 O.R.

An easement for water pipelines, reservoir, and pumping plant system to LRCMWC per 199/325 O.R.

An easement for water tank to Lower Rock Creek Mutual Water Company per 285/585 O.R.

An easement for construction, operation and maintenance of a waterline, well and equipment, and access thereto, to Lower Rock Creek Mutual Water Company per 706/127 O.R.

An easement for construction, operation and maintenance of a waterline, well and equipment, and access thereto, to Lower Rock Creek Mutual Water Company per 706/129 O.R.

An easement for construction, operation and maintenance of a waterline, well and equipment, and access thereto, to Lower Rock Creek Mutual Water Company per Inst. #2003004318.

Notes regarding LRCMWC facilities on the property:

- LRCMWC has established access to their water cisterns on the parcel via the easements listed previously and highlighted in Exhibit 3-5.
- Maintenance and repair of their easements is the sole responsibility of LRCMWC.
- LRCMWC use of the new driveway to access their water cisterns is dependent on a licensing agreement with the applicants.
- The two interties that will be located near the LRCMWC water cisterns and on Lower Rock Creek Road near the new access point will be negotiated at a shared cost with LRCMWC.

5.4 PROJECT COMPONENTS IN AMENDMENT #3

The proposed Amendment #3 comprises three primary features: (1) realignment of the currently planned driveway/access road; (2) a homestead site; and (3) a homestead farm area. The project also will include appropriate infrastructure to serve the project site. These components are described in more detail below.

- Number of lots to a total of one (1) for Homestead with small-scale agriculture, consistent with the Paradise Community Goals, Concerns and Objectives and the Mono County General Plan.
- Realigning the interior access/driveway/road. The new access driveway will be engineered to have greatest permeability, follow the highest standards for emergency access, and to improve security of the parcel with a Trail-Lock gate with Knox Box at the entrance of Lower Rock Creek Rd. The new driveway will be the only access point from the Lower Rock Creek Road for ingress and egress to the interior of the parcel. The current available access from the county road (crosses DWP/BLM property) to the east side/BLM will not be used and blocked. The new driveway will resolve the issue of access to the parcel.

“04.180 Access. Access to provide adequate ingress and egress shall be built and maintained to all lots in each designation according to all applicable road standards as determined by the Public Works Department. Land Use Element-2018 11-227

“06.080 Paving, striping and driveway improvement standards.

“A. All parking and driveway areas shall be paved except as provided in Table 06.020.

“B. All paved parking spaces shall be striped in accordance with the approved parking layouts shown in Figure 06.010.

“C. Driveways shall comply with applicable provisions of the Fire Safe Standards in Chapter 22 and the county Roadway Standards.

“D. When considering lot coverage square footage calculations, required surface paving may be counted at 80% of actual value when pervious surface systems are used. An additional reduction may be granted if engineered plans demonstrate a permeability factor greater than 20%. Land Use Element-2018 11-228”

- The property will contain two main areas in the single Lot: “The Homesite”- an area for the primary residence and accessory buildings which includes the Lower Well House area; and “The Small-Scale Homestead Farm” for agricultural uses with an area for seasonal visitors/guests using off-grid agri-tourism accommodations. The visitor/guest area will include the Upper Well/Pump house, water infrastructure, and a two-tiered wildlife pond.

5.5 HOMESITE AREA FOR PRIVATE RESIDENTIAL USE

The Homesite portion of the Property would contain the following structures and features:

- East Wing of home- 50’ x 70’ structure with solar panels and green roof which contains: a 3-car garage; utility room; two bedrooms; media/entertaining space; and two bathrooms. It will have an attached 20’ deck. It will serve as the “primary residence” during phase 2 before the west wing is completed.
- 20’ x 20’ storage shed attached to the East wing.
- West Wing of home- 65’ x 130’ dwelling with solar panels and green roof; five bedrooms and a kitchen.
- 10’ x 30’ entrance/foyer, connecting East and West wings, will most likely be built with the East Wing, during Phase 2.
- 50’ x 60’ detached garage.
- 60’ x 60’ paved motor court for emergency access to the interior of the dwelling area.
- Native pollinator garden 10’ x 60’ approximate.
- Natural swimming pond 20’x80’ approximate.
- 25’ x 70’ structure with solar panels for pressure tanks, garden shed and 3-car garage.
- 30’ x 60’ greenhouse.
- 20’ x 60’ garden with chicken coop 10’ x 12’ with solar panels and green roof (chicken compost).
- Septic tank with constructed wetland, gray water filter system.
- Emergency generator.
- 10,000-gallon water tank.
- Fire Hydrant.
- 25’ x 65’ Vintage Trailer Carport with solar panels and green roof and a utility room.
- 12’ x 15’ maintenance building with PowerPack Substation.
- Hedgerows surrounding the Main Dwelling Area.

5.6 LOWER WELL HOUSE AREA

The Lower Well House Area of the Property would contain the following structures and features:

- 50’ x 60’ Structure with solar panels and green roof for well head shed (10’ x 12’ houses the well head at this time), pump and water infrastructure system, and battery bank system. Will also store the mobile workshop trailer and ranch truck. Living walls and landscaping to mitigate negative impact from Paradise community.
- Emergency generator.
- 10’ x 20’ Garbage collection area.
- 10,000 gallon water tank.

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- Fire Hydrant.

5.7 AGRICULTURAL AREA/HOMESTEAD FARM (APPROX. 6 ACRES)

The Agricultural/Homestead Farm area of the Property would contain the following structures and features:

- One full-time position for labor
- 30' x 50' Aquaponic greenhouse
- Six 12' x 25' rainbow trout fish tanks/runs adjacent to the greenhouse
- 40' x 60' greenhouse building lower level for storage and work area and Aquaponic system
- 40' x 60' farm structure workspace and commercial kitchen - with solar panels and green roof-

“Commercial Kitchen Space . . . : There are many options within value added requirements of a cottage food permit, which are issued by Mono County Environmental Health. However, many products produced on farms need to be processed or prepared in a commercial kitchen. Through a ministerial permit, this can be an added cost for entry into the market.”

(Mono County Sustainable Agricultural Strategy, January 4, 2018.)

- Six 30' x 60' rotational fenced pastures for Mangalitsa pigs. Bio-integrated and rotational grazing.
- 40' x 60' pen for the Mangalitsa pigs (1 Boar, 2 Sows)
- 20' x 40' Duckweed Pond for closed cycle of waste and nutrient high crops of duckweed and cattails
- Two Bank Barns (40' x 60' & 40' x 40') with solar panels and green roof for:
 - Housing of goats and sheep
 - Space for CDFA license processing area:
 - i) These operations do not need to be registered with CDFA MPES
 - ii) Up to 1,000 poultry per year, CDFA exempt
 - iii) No limit to the number of rabbits processed under the CDFA exemption.
 - iv) Poultry (and rabbits) must be sold direct to consumer only (no wholesale/sold to be resold)
 - v) Poultry (and rabbits) must be raised and slaughtered on site
 - vi) If no employees are used (processed only by immediate family members), the meat can be sold on or off the farm (i.e. farmers market). California Food and Agriculture Code section 24713.
 - vii) Meat for Personal Consumption. Livestock producers may slaughter their own animals or contract with mobile custom slaughterers for on-farm slaughter of animals to be consumed within their household as described above. Meat from animals slaughtered on-farm cannot be sold.
- Milking parlor area, CDFA license
- Milk processing area, CDFA license
- Enclosed pen area with ruminant hedgerow forage fencing
- Equipment storage area
- Grain, hay, and straw storage
- Two 9' silos for feed
- Bathroom

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- Composting area enclosed with different areas for:
 - Chicken Coop/Run and enclosed area for the Composting
 - Black Soldier Fly Grub Composting area
 - Vermiculture area
 - 3-stage composting area
 - Two 10,000-gallon water tanks and four pump houses 15' x 20' with solar panels and green roof
 - 150,000 gallon maximum water storage tank with pump house. Size undetermined until water engineers have designed the water system of the project for parcel development
 - 25' x 60' carport with green roof
 - 50' x 70' waterfowl enclosure with small pond
 - 20' x 60' Turkey coop and run
 - 20' x 60' Chicken coop and run
 - 20' x 30' Rabbit Colony pen
 - 20' x 30' Quail pen
 - 2- 3 acres of Permaculture orchard of fruit and nut trees, with natural flow water bio-cells
 - 10' x 60' Native Pollinator Garden
 - 10' x 20' Honey-bee hives area
 - Hedgerows surround the area to increase native habitat and foraging. Native species food forest for personal foraging
 - Constructed Septic Wetland System
 - The Rock Creek Ranch Revised Conditions of Approval (2014) also permit installation a telecommunications tower/facility in the vicinity of the LRCMWC water tanks, via use permit, to facilitate telecommunication service capability, per TTM 37-56.

Note: The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Economic Research Service defines a “farm” and farm type by its gross cash farm revenue:² “[a] farm is defined as any place from which \$1,000 or more of agricultural products were produced and sold, or normally would have been sold, during the year.” A Homestead is a type of small farm that generates income to pay for taxes and other expenses from the marketable goods produced from work on the land, with the income not to exceed \$350,000 from yearly sales.³

Note: A Homestead Farm is by its own definition not a commercial enterprise. A non-commercial farm generally means a farm where the farm family provides much of the capital and labor for the farm and where the production of agricultural products is to provide for the basic needs of the family, with the extra to sell to pay the expenses, the taxes and the maintenance of the homestead. The primary income (up to \$350,000) can still be earnings generated from the different aspects of a homestead. See Table 4, below.

² “Gross cash farm revenue” includes sales of crops and livestock, payments from certain Federal agriculture programs, and certain other farm-related income, such as production contracts. *See:*

<https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/farm-economy/farm-structure-and-organization/farm-structure/>

³ *Id.*

HOMESTEADING

Homestead farming is the practice of living and working a piece of land both on a substance level and to produce crops for sale. Sometimes called a “farmstead,” modern families are adopting this model as a means to be as self-sufficient as possible while generating an income from their land for taxes and other mandatory expenses. The difference between homesteading and farming is that homesteaders primarily grow food for themselves on less than 50 acres of zoned residential land; while farmers primarily grow food for sale, on average, over 400 acres of zoned agricultural or industrial land. Homesteaders almost universally live on the land they work, where farmers may not. In modern times farms tend to be thousands of acres, where homesteads are most often less than 100 acres.

Table 4- Difference between Homesteading and Farming

Homesteaders fall under typical residential laws for their state and county	Farms, on the other hand, are usually zoned agricultural or industrial
Homesteaders grow a wide variety of food	Farmers tend to only grow one or two crops
Homesteaders eat a lot of what they produce	Farmers rarely eat their own crop, instead selling it and buying food like everyone else
Homesteaders tend to prefer low volume manual production methods	Farmers generally use large combines, tractors, harvesters, and other automated agricultural machinery almost exclusively.
Homesteaders live on their property	On the other hand farmers don't necessarily live on the property they work. At one time, many farmers also had a farm house residence adjacent to their fields. But, in modern times where individual farmers are working thousands of acres, there is no necessity that they live on the farm land itself. Many farmers choose to live in small farm towns or other residences
The original Homestead Act provided 160 acres for each family. This is rather large by modern standards. Many modern homesteaders prefer parcels between 5–20 acres in size as a nice compromise in terms of cost and usability. We are using about 10 acres of the parcel for the Homestead. It takes about 10 acres to sustain a family unit	While there is no set size for a farm or homestead, modern farms tend to be much larger than modern homesteads.
Uses permaculture, poly-culture food guild, and small scale bio-integrated design	Mono-culture industrial scale design that is dependent on fertilizers/antibiotics
Food Forest/Hedgerow system is very common in the permaculture community. A food forest/hedgerow is a designed ecosystem designed to produce food to support a family or community. It is used often in Homesteads because: -Sustainable mixes many plants and animals together -Designed to be largely self-sufficient -May not require replanting -Very low effort to maintain -Primarily native species The basic idea is to model the residency and productivity of a wild forest — that is to make something that will just keep growing back — but fill it with beneficial and edible plants and animal habitat, pollination of crops, and windbreak.	
Heritage breeds of animals and heirloom crops for genetic diversity (non-GMO)	Commercial breeds and GMO

HERITAGE ANIMALS

Throughout the history of civilization, humans have raised a variety of livestock and agriculture. Today's large-scale industrial farming methods only use a few specialized breeds that have been developed to meet certain requirements. For example, large-scale produced turkeys have been bred to have bigger breasts. As a result of these farming practices, thousands of non-commercial animal breeds and crop varieties have died out. When they die out, they take their genetic diversity with them. In the last century, nearly 75% of the genetic diversity in our food supply has been lost.

Genetic diversity is essential to protecting our food supply. If we only raise a few breeds or grow a few varieties of crops, and if they all get wiped out by a disease, we won't have any food left. When a pathogen gets in the food supply, it's important to have a large genetic diversity because some breeds will survive. The smaller the genetic diversity in our food supply, the smaller our chances are of surviving famine. This is what happened during the Irish Potato Famine when a million people planted one variety of potato.

These days, sustainable farmers/homesteaders have been raising heritage and heirloom breeds and crops in order to preserve their lineages. Simply raising them is not enough; in order for them to survive, there must be demand for them. So, to keep from losing more variety in animals and crops, we must eat them. Heritage turkeys and Heritage pigs are not only lower in fat and better for you, they also taste so much better than non-heritage meats.

Heritage often refers to animals. Heritage breeds are traditional breeds of animals that were raised for food in the past, but their numbers dwindled during the rise of industrial agriculture. In the last 15 years, almost 200 breeds of farm animals have gone extinct worldwide.

Heritage breeds are better adapted to withstand disease and live in open pastures. They don't need constant doses of antibiotics or temperature-controlled interiors the way that factory farmed animals do. If heritage breeds are allowed to die out, future farmers will be unable to use their unique genetic material to breed animals with the traits that make them sustainable.

To be considered a heritage breed, an animal has to have unique genetic traits and be raised on an organic and sustainable farm or homestead.

Table 5- Heritage Breeds that will be raised on the Homestead

Breed	
Oberhasli Goat	Milk
St. Croix Sheep	Meat
White Holland Turkey	Meat
Dewlap Toulouse Goose	Meat
Tufted Roman Goose	Guardian
Silver Appleyard Duck	Eggs
Alysbury Duck	Meat
Silver fox Rabbit	Meat
Mangalitsa Pig	Meat
Brahma Chicken	Meat
American Bresse	Meat
Ameraucana, Cream Legbar, Whiting, Black Australorp, Silver Grey Dorking, Dominique, Marans, and Minorcas	Eggs Meat Composters

5.8 VISITOR/GUEST, AGRI-TOURISM ACCOMMODATION AREA

- Two-tiered Wildlife pond, each pond will be approximately 4' deep, 22' wide, and 46' long

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- 2 Acres off-grid Agri-Tourism Accommodations
 - 8' x 15' - 120-sf pump/well house
 - 3,000-gallon water tank
 - Two 15' x 20' utility sheds with green roof and solar panels that will house the pump systems and battery banks
 - Two 5,000-gallon water tanks
 - 25' x 30' Carport with green roof and solar panels, battery bank storage system for the 8' x 15' well/pump house
 - 8' x 15' Bathhouse for "Queen Bee" (please note that the bathhouse is shower and sink only)
 - Four Accessory buildings to be determined, all with green roof and solar panels, 120 sq ft each
 - Hedgerow for windbreak and forage and landscaped to mitigate view from Paradise
 - 10' x 38' Recreational vehicle site with "Queen Bee" trailer, 300-gallon water tank
 - Four 40' x 60' carports with solar panels and green roof with the following contained under the carport:
 - Spartan Vintage Trailers (8' x 43' Spartan Imperial Mansion)
 - 1,000-gallon water tank,
 - 20' x 25' parking area,
 - 20' x 25' utility shed.

Note: Trailer stays are 3 days minimum/30 days maximum, with a maximum of 15 guests. Stays will only occur from September 1st to November 30th and February 1st to May 30th

Note: The proposed Vintage Trailer Guest/Visitor accommodations will not qualify as a Mobile Home Park/Special Occupancy Park, which is defined as any area of land or property that has at least two recreational vehicles, tents, camping cabins, and/or lots that are held out for rent or lease.⁴

The County's General Plan provides for temporary use of a recreational vehicle (such as the vintage trailers proposed), and exempts that use from review by the Director of Planning: "The temporary use of an RV for agricultural-related purposes, where a parcel is 20 acres or larger, shall be exempt from the Director Review."⁵ The trailers, which would be located adjacent to the Homestead Farm, also will follow the guidelines for Agri-Tourism Accommodations and the California Agricultural Homestay (or Farmstay) Guidelines,⁶ along with the Mono County *Sustainable Agricultural Strategy* adopted on January 4, 2018. The California Agricultural Homestay (or Farm Stay) Guidelines were established in 1999, and revised in 2008. These guidelines, codified in the California Health & Safety Code, provide definition and guidance for county and local health jurisdictions to allow on-farm lodging and meal service to limited numbers of guests.⁷

5.9 SEASONAL AGRICULTURAL-RELATED AGRI-TOURISM ACTIVITIES

- Classes or Workshops
- Homestead Farm Tours
- Native Pollinators Garden/Nursery Tours
- Heritage Livestock and Heirloom Produce Conservation Tours and Classes: see Table 3, *Orchard & Hedgerow of Heirloom Trees*

⁴ <https://www.hcd.ca.gov/manufactured-mobile-home/mobile-home-parks/index.shtml>

⁵ General Plan, §04.040: Uses subject to Director Review.

⁶ Cal. Health & Safety Code, § 113870.

⁷ *Id.*

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- Historical Exhibits and Local History Talks
 - Lectures/Presentations
 - Internships and Research
 - Agricultural Technical Tours
 - Participatory Experiences
 - School/Youth Tours
 - Farm-to-Table Dinners
 - Farmstand (during Harvest season May to November)
 - Pack Goat Hiking
 - Farmers Market, such as the Eastern Sierra Certified Farmers Market (ESCFM)
 - CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) associations, such as Sierra Bounty⁸

5.10 NON-SEASONAL AGRICULTURAL-RELATED PURPOSES, ALLOWED USE & CDFIA CERTIFIED (NOT PART OF AGRI-TOURISM)

- Poultry, Rabbits & Eggs (sell surplus)
- Goat Milk (not for sale)
- Sheep Meat (not for sale)
- Mangalitsa processing (not for sale)
- Micro-greens & Produce from Aquaponic Greenhouse (sell surplus)
- Mushrooms (sell surplus)
- Sale of Heritage Livestock Breeders (see Table 5, below)

5.11 PROJECT COMPONENTS OF AGRI-TOURISM AND HOMESTEADING IN AMENDMENT #3

5.11.1 Agri-Tourism

Certain specified activities are covered by the term “agricultural tourism.” It is usually defined as activities including farm tours, classes on the farm, agricultural technical tours, farm to table dinners, u-pick fruit, hiking, animal husbandry and other forms of outdoor recreation offered to farm visitors, conducted by a farmer on-farm, for the enjoyment and/or education of the public, which primarily promote the sale, marketing, production, harvesting, or use of the products of the farm and enhance the public’s understanding and awareness of farming and farm life. Mono County adopted the *Mono County Sustainable Agricultural Strategy* on January 4, 2018.

“As Mono County’s tourism base supported by recreational activities is successful and established, merging tourism with working lands creates the functional sub-context of Agritourism. Agritourism is a broad term that encompasses many enterprises. However, the main incentive is to improve the economic quality of life for an operator. In stimulating a needed income, the incentive to remain on the farm will continue, so the planning horizon will increase. Agritourism is the utilization of a value added product to earn on comparative advantages, with its success being brought by diversity and direct sales through marketing in lieu of financial or production modes. Further, the tenant is based in a land based connection and embracing the rural qualities provided; thereby this would cover more traditional farm stands with cottage foodstuffs, bed and breakfast home-stays, weddings, farm to table dinners, wineries, breweries, and distilleries. [...]”

⁸ See <http://sierrabounty.org/>.

“The Use Permit process typically groups activities into a single document; thereby, many of the features of agritourism can be incorporated. There is also the ability to ‘downgrade’ a use permit process to an internal director’s review, which eliminates the need for planning commission interpretation and usually public noticing, though this may also be a requirement depending on the function of the project’s scope. The ability to create this flexibility would be through the application of seasonal use. Increasing the density would not be applicable to such a varied activity. [...]”

“Agritourism & Place-based awareness: The water quality, biodiversity, and carbon emissions retained provide high economic returns not taken into account within the present economic model. The ecosystem is multifunctional and not quantified into standard economic models. A reevaluation of agritourism in coordinated preservation of lands protected is a cost value opportunity during off-season production. Mono County’s potential in agritourism is less homogenized than the predominant agritourism model. Mono County farms are adjacent to important wildlife and habitat. Intensification of agriculture areas where arable lands are already disturbed or grasslands that are protected increase the diversity. Maintaining a healthy ecosystem should be an emphasis in order to maintain agricultural productivity. Similar to public unknowing the connections within the food system, there is also a disconnection from natural succession and the understanding of what conservation does to the landscape. Agritourism fosters a place based awareness and comprehension of environmental issues faced. Typically, conservation easement criteria discourage agritourism activities, diminishing the impact of increased visitation. However, conservation should be a part of the operator’s mission for practical and aesthetic qualities. The ability to view the enhanced conservation easement and interact with the biodiversity created provides a sense of value gained through tax funding dispersal. The Bi-State SageGrouse interaction with private lands offers such an interaction. Currently, public outreach and mobilization for BSSG conservation is the priority of the LAWG. The research and conservation efforts accomplished are defunct if there is not a participatory aspect towards these successes. The personal stories and experiences establish successful conservation. [...]”

“Conclusion: The sustainable agricultural lands strategy provides an agricultural lands inventory across jurisdictional boundaries and a tool to prioritize the most highly productive and critically threatened lands, coordinates management across jurisdictions, and develops mitigation strategies to balance grazing operations with conservation and improvement of natural resources such as wildlife habitat. The project will protect lands most at risk through implementation of the toolbox and recommendations, and continues to coordinate with other agencies to seek mutual benefits between agricultural operations and resource conservation. By defining win-win solutions, we are collaboratively preserving the agricultural industry in Mono County into the future. Mono County appreciates the Sustainable Agricultural Strategy grant from the State of California, and looks forward to continuing to tackle the issues that impact our local agricultural industry. Recent issues have dramatically changed the face of agriculture in general, and the impacts are currently playing out in Mono County and the Eastern Sierra, as well as the State of California.”

(*Mono County Sustainable Agricultural Strategy*, January 4, 2018.)⁹

5.11.2 Homesteading

For most people, the main aspects of a Homestead are owning their land and the buildings on it, and doing small-scale farming with the goal of being self-sufficient, or at least limiting their reliance on outside sources. Homesteading typically applies to small family owned farms outside of the agricultural and industrial zones, practicing sustainable living techniques and small-scale agriculture on residential land for the main benefit of sustaining the family but it is more than just surviving- it is also teaching and sharing with others, a tenant of Permaculture. Some believe that homesteading is defined by the lifestyle choices that you make, rather than whether you live in the country or the city. “The ideal nature of Mono County has its roots in the working lands motif. The rancher and farmer of Mono County are also a part of a lifestyle choice.” (*Mono County Sustainable Agricultural Strategy*, January 4, 2018).

Many Homesteads have seasonal farm stands to sell their produce. They also may be part of a CSA or sell at a local Farmer’s Market and have a Cottage Industry, all permitted and licensed. Homesteading and teaching others to Homestead will be an important factor to the health of the community and ultimately the planet.

“We need to figure out how to get more farmers working or develop ways for current farmers to be able to produce more food, if we hope to keep this food movement moving. While it is practical to think that Eastside farmers can feed local people from May to October, give or take a few weeks, the real key to a food movement is teaching people to supplement their diets by farming the land they live on. Don’t have land to farm, well then attend your farmers markets. Don’t shop for veggies and fruits on Monday or Tuesday when your farmers market is on Wednesday. Buy local when available. Shop at your local small grocers (such as Sierra Sundance, Manor Market and Mono Market), since they try to carry local products as much as possible. Participate in local co-ops like Sierra Bounty that are encouraging farmers to grow enough of an item for at least 75 families per week, and Bishop Creek Farms that is servicing 20 plus Inyo County families with weekly CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) boxes during its first year of farming commercially. Volunteer at a local farm through Sierra Bounty, or follow Sierra Bounty and some of the farmers on Facebook to see what’s happening in the world of high desert farming. Grow your own local food source ... hire Ian from Edible Gardens in Round Valley to show you how. Once the Eastside gets a handle on this, the next step is to teach people how to process and store the bounty produced to begin to provide nutrition during the winter as well. Briggs also believes that the way to truly become sustainable is to provide locally grown food in schools, and to teach children the basics of how to farm and become responsible for their own food security. The education of the children is the way to create a true and lasting food movement.”¹⁰

“Farmer’s Markets, Value Added products, and Community Supported Agriculture: Currently, there are no Farmer’s Markets in the unincorporated Mono County. The Town of Mammoth Lakes, the only incorporated city in Mono County, has a summer Farmer’s Market. Entry into the Farmer’s Market is relatively simple. An operator must have a current Town of Mammoth Lakes business license, have membership dues for their space through the purveyor at Skip’s Farmer’s Market, and register with the Inyo

⁹ See also:

https://www.bistatesagegrouse.com/sites/default/files/fileattachments/general/page/561/1_salc_report_final.pdf

¹⁰ <https://thesheetnews.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/GreenSheetSept2011.pdf>

Mono Agriculture Commissioner. In addition to raw products, California Public Health Code has provided an outlet for value added products through Cottage Food laws, whereby an applicant with a permit and an inspected kitchen may offer certain foodstuffs for value added product and sale directly to a market; there are currently four permits issued, two Class A and two Class B. There is currently one Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program operating in Mono County, Sierra Bountly. This CSA acts as a food HUB, where local products are sourced and distributed through Stellar Brew, a local coffee shop and owner of Sierra Bountly.”

(Mono County Sustainable Agricultural Strategy, January 4, 2018.)

Homesteaders practice subsistence regenerative agriculture, permaculture, bio-integrated farming, animal husbandry, cottage industry, and often preserve their own food that they harvest to last them through the winter. So skills like canning and preserving are essential for homesteaders to have and teach. Homesteads are a unique opportunity to teach and learn sustainable practices such as agricultural bio-integrated technical systems, aquaponics, homestead butchering, and animal husbandry. They may even produce their own clothing, textiles and other crafts in the cottage industry- either to use within their own home or to sell to generate extra income to pay for taxes and other expenses from work done on their own land. The key element to Homesteading is the desire to reduce waste, create closed systems and improve the soil and water retention of the land while teaching others to do the same for the benefit of the planet. Homesteaders tend to live a more independent life and are far more likely to rely on renewable energy sources like wind or solar electricity. In addition to growing their own vegetables and livestock, the idea of being completely “off-grid” is a massive appeal to a lot of homesteaders. Homesteading is a type of Farming that has a rich history in America, starting with the Homestead Act signed by Abraham Lincoln in 1862- and dramatically affecting the future of rural communities for the better.

“As a rural county with low population densities and only 6% of the land base in private ownership, Mono County has a unique agricultural story to tell. Agriculture is the County’s second economic industry and is key not only to the stability of our communities, but also our rural character and quality of life. Most people move to Mono County for the magnificent viewscapes and inherent wildness of the land, which has been preserved by open space, open ranges, and family-owned agriculture handed down through generations. These ranches and operations rely heavily on the 94% of land owned by public agencies, as few agricultural producers in the County can survive on the limited private land base. Management issues across these jurisdictional boundaries; development pressure as the economy recovers; and natural resource management concerns such as water conservation, wetlands protection, riparian habitat conservation, and sensitive species issues clearly indicate the need for comprehensive land use, agriculture, and range management across Mono County.”

(Mono County Sustainable Agricultural Strategy, January 4, 2018.)



Swall Meadows, California, in 2007. Kendra Atleework begins her memoir, *Miracle Country*, with the 2015 fire that decimated her 200-person hometown, which is located north of Bishop. Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

“*Miracle Country*’ is the title of Kendra Atleework’s new and magical memoir about her life in the Eastern Sierra. The book begins with the 2015 fire that decimated her 200-person hometown, Swall Meadows, north of Bishop and 7,000 feet above sea level (“marking the border between desert and sky”). . . She also has glimpsed its future, since climate change has shadowed her whole life, with the Eastern Sierra’s winters growing warmer, its fires bigger, its seasons more alike. As California lives through new apocalypse after new apocalypse, we’ll have to learn to go on and rebuild, as the Eastern Sierra already has, over and over.”¹¹

¹¹ Joe Mathews, “Connecting California: Feeling beaten up right now? ‘Miracle Country’ offers key lessons.” *Desert Sun*, September 24, 2020. Available at: <https://www.desertsun.com/story/opinion/columnists/2020/09/24/miracle-country-offers-californians-lessons-hard-time-joe-mathews-connecting-california/3523763001/>.

HERITAGE ANIMALS

Throughout the history of civilization, humans have raised a variety of livestock and agriculture. Today's large-scale industrial farming methods only use a few specialized breeds that have been developed to meet certain requirements. For example, large-scale produced turkeys have been bred to have bigger breasts. As a result of these farming practices, thousands of non-commercial animal breeds and crop varieties have died out. When they die out, they take their genetic diversity with them. In the last century, nearly 75% of the genetic diversity in our food supply has been lost.

Genetic diversity is essential to protecting our food supply. If we only raise a few breeds or grow a few varieties of crops, and if they all get wiped out by a disease, we won't have any food left. When a pathogen gets in the food supply, it's important to have a large genetic diversity because some breeds will survive. The smaller the genetic diversity in our food supply, the smaller our chances are of surviving famine. This is what happened during the Irish Potato Famine when a million people planted one variety of potato.

These days, sustainable farmers/homesteaders have been raising heritage and heirloom breeds and crops in order to preserve their lineages. Simply raising them is not enough; in order for them to survive, there must be demand for them. So, to keep from losing more variety in animals and crops, we must eat them. Heritage turkeys and Heritage pigs are not only lower in fat and better for you, they also taste so much better than non-heritage meats.

Heritage often refers to animals. Heritage breeds are traditional breeds of animals that were raised for food in the past, but their numbers dwindled during the rise of industrial agriculture. In the last 15 years, almost 200 breeds of farm animals have gone extinct worldwide.

Heritage breeds are better adapted to withstand disease and live in open pastures. They don't need constant doses of antibiotics or temperature-controlled interiors the way that factory farmed animals do. If heritage breeds are allowed to die out, future farmers will be unable to use their unique genetic material to breed animals with the traits that make them sustainable.

To be considered a heritage breed, an animal has to have unique genetic traits and be raised on an organic and sustainable farm or homestead.

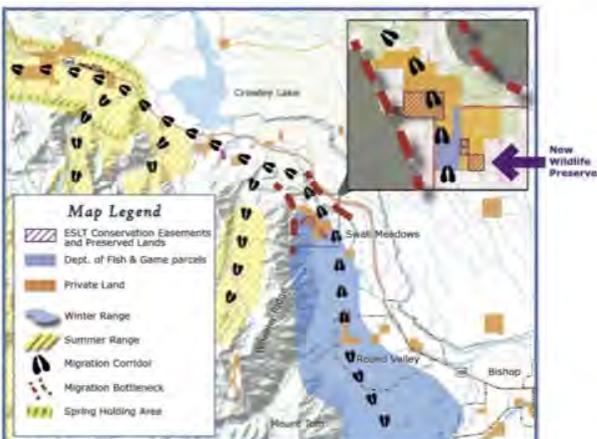
Table 5- Heritage Breeds that will be raised on the Homestead

Breed	
Oberhasli Goat	Milk
St. Croix Sheep	Meat
White Holland Turkey	Meat
Dewlap Toulouse Goose	Meat
Tufted Roman Goose	Guardian
Silver Appleyard Duck	Eggs
Alysbury Duck	Meat
Silver fox Rabbit	Meat
Mangalitsa Pig	Meat
Brahma Chicken	Meat
American Bresse	Meat
Ameraucana, Cream Legbar, Whiting, Black Australorp, Silver Grey Dorking, Dominique, Marans, and Minorcas	Eggs Meat Composters

ORCHARD AND HEDGEROWS OF HEIRLOOM TREES

The Orchard in the Agricultural area and the hedgerow in the Main Homesite will bring back the trees of antiquity that were once a part of the Eastern Sierra landscape. Partnering with specialized nurseries, we plan to grow the Apple trees that are genetically related to the Apple trees in Swall Meadows. We consider heirloom fruit trees as varieties that have developed a historical or cultural significance which have been passed from generation-to-generation and often has a local or even familial significance. The common supermarket varieties appeal to commercial growers because they need fruit that ripens all at once, doesn't bruise easily, grows high yields, ships and stores for extended lengths of time, and sits on the shelf without a blemish. Flavor is often a secondary consideration. These requirements are essential for commercial growers to meet because consumers have come to expect visually homogeneous fruit. This demand eliminates heirloom trees' unique qualities. Reviving the heirloom trees in the area will bring back a unique local quality and an opportunity for the community to share in its history.

Today, almost 2,500 mule deer migrate twice a year through the community of Swall Meadows, where their path is constricted through a one-mile wide bottleneck between the Wheeler Ridge and Owens River Gorge. The orchard and hedgerows will be designed to blend in with the landscape and not impede or hurt the migratory corridor. The hedgerow will create a natural barrier protecting the orchard and at the same time create habitat and fodder for the native species.



Apple variety that will be included: Hudson's Golden Gem apple is perhaps the finest eating russet with crisp, breaking, sugary flesh and a distinct nutty flavor that resembles the Bosc pear. Hudson's Golden Gem apple tree was discovered among a dense group of bushes and trees in Oregon. Once discovered it was quickly introduced in 1931 by the Hudson Wholesale Nurseries. The Hudson's Golden Gem apple is conical, elongated, yellow russet. Flesh is white to cream to pale yellow. Quite disease resistant to apple scab and other common apple diseases, a winter hardy tree.



Low chill: Yes
 Heirloom: Yes
 Uses: Fresh eating, pies and cider
 Harvest Period: Mid to Late
 Bloom Period: Early

HISTORIC CONSERVATION VALUES

June 20, 2012 by Aaron

"... ES/LT in partnership with private landowners have included what was once the highest elevation production orchard in the Country..."

"Working in land conservation we spend a lot of time researching what we call the Conservation Values of each potential project, the unique characteristics of the property that make that location special enough for our organization to determine that it is worthy of conservation. These could be specific habitat for a species of special concern, significant prime farmland, or in some cases even an important scenic view that is enjoyed by the public. To document these things we rely often on experts such as biologists, soil scientists, as well as our own expertise and observations in the field. Personally, although it is my interest in land use and natural history that led me into this line of work, over the last few years I have found that it can be equally interesting to piece together the human history of a property too. Whether interviewing landowners, reviewing historic photographs, or interpreting copies of old homestead patents – there is a lot of detective work that anyone can do to better understand the history of the Eastern Sierra."

Apple Orchard in Swall Meadows

