



Environmental Review Initial Study

Application Number: **08-0196**

Date: February 9, 2009
Staff Planner: Carolyn Banti

I. OVERVIEW AND ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION

APPLICANT: Sherry Hrabko

APN: 108-351-04

OWNER: Patricia Reap

SUPERVISORAL DISTRICT: 2nd

LOCATION: The parcel is located at the end of Nunes Road, approximately 2/3 of a mile from its intersection with White Road. (see Attachment 1)

SUMMARY PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The scope of the application under consideration is to recognize an existing, partially constructed horse arena and stable as well as authorize the grading required to complete the horse arena and replace the fill prism beneath a partially constructed stable. The grading required for this work consists of the recognition of 3,580 cubic yards of cut and 3,200 cubic yards of fill and the authorization of an additional 545 cubic yards of cut and 2,345 cubic yards of fill.

ALL OF THE FOLLOWING POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS ARE EVALUATED IN THIS INITIAL STUDY. CATEGORIES THAT ARE MARKED HAVE BEEN ANALYZED IN GREATER DETAIL BASED ON PROJECT SPECIFIC INFORMATION.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Geology/Soils	<input type="checkbox"/> Noise
<input type="checkbox"/> Hydrology/Water Supply/Water Quality	<input type="checkbox"/> Air Quality
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biological Resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Services & Utilities
<input type="checkbox"/> Energy & Natural Resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Land Use, Population & Housing
<input type="checkbox"/> Visual Resources & Aesthetics	<input type="checkbox"/> Cumulative Impacts
<input type="checkbox"/> Cultural Resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Growth Inducement
<input type="checkbox"/> Hazards & Hazardous Materials	<input type="checkbox"/> Mandatory Findings of Significance
<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation/Traffic	



Environmental Review Initial Study

Application Number: **08-0196**

Date: February 9, 2009

Staff Planner: Carolyn Banti

I. OVERVIEW AND ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION

APPLICANT: Sherry Hrabko

APN: 108-351-04

OWNER: Patricia Reap

SUPERVISORAL DISTRICT: 2nd

LOCATION: The parcel is located at the end of Nunes Road, approximately 2/3 of a mile from its intersection with White Road. (see Attachment 1)

SUMMARY PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The scope of the application under consideration is to recognize an existing, partially constructed horse arena and stable as well as authorize the grading required to complete the horse arena and replace the fill prism beneath a partially constructed stable. The grading required for this work consists of the recognition of 3,580 cubic yards of cut and 3,200 cubic yards of fill and the authorization of an additional 545 cubic yards of cut and 2,345 cubic yards of fill.

ALL OF THE FOLLOWING POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS ARE EVALUATED IN THIS INITIAL STUDY. CATEGORIES THAT ARE MARKED HAVE BEEN ANALYZED IN GREATER DETAIL BASED ON PROJECT SPECIFIC INFORMATION.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Geology/Soils	<input type="checkbox"/> Noise
<input type="checkbox"/> Hydrology/Water Supply/Water Quality	<input type="checkbox"/> Air Quality
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biological Resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Services & Utilities
<input type="checkbox"/> Energy & Natural Resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Land Use, Population & Housing
<input type="checkbox"/> Visual Resources & Aesthetics	<input type="checkbox"/> Cumulative Impacts
<input type="checkbox"/> Cultural Resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Growth Inducement
<input type="checkbox"/> Hazards & Hazardous Materials	<input type="checkbox"/> Mandatory Findings of Significance
<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation/Traffic	

County of Santa Cruz Planning Department
701 Ocean Street, 4th Floor, Santa Cruz CA 95060

DISCRETIONARY APPROVAL(S) BEING CONSIDERED

<input type="checkbox"/> General Plan Amendment	<input type="checkbox"/> Grading Permit
<input type="checkbox"/> Land Division	<input type="checkbox"/> Riparian Exception
<input type="checkbox"/> Rezoning	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other: Preliminary Grading Approval
<input type="checkbox"/> Development Permit	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Coastal Development Permit	<input type="checkbox"/>

NON-LOCAL APPROVALS

Other agencies that must issue permits or authorizations:

None

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW ACTION

On the basis of this Initial Study and supporting documents:

☐ I find that the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.

☒ I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because the attached mitigation measures have been added to the project. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.

☐ I find that the proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.

Matt Johnston

Date

For: Claudia Slater
Environmental Coordinator

II. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

EXISTING SITE CONDITIONS

Parcel Size: 25.883 Acres
Existing Land Use: Homesite
Vegetation: Oak Woodland and Open Grassland
Slope: Variable, less than 30-percent in the area of development
Nearby Watercourse: Stream 1474, Unnamed perennial tributary to Harkins Slough
Distance To: ~450 feet
Rock/Soil Type: Silty Sands, Clayey Sands

ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES AND CONSTRAINTS

Groundwater Supply: None Mapped	Liquefaction: Negligible Potential
Water Supply Watershed: None Mapped	Fault Zone: None Mapped
Groundwater Recharge: Portion	Scenic Corridor: No
Timber or Mineral: None Mapped	Historic: None Mapped
Agricultural Resource: None Mapped	Archaeology: Yes
Biologically Sensitive Habitat: No	Noise Constraint: None Mapped
Fire Hazard: None Mapped	Electric Power Lines: Yes
Floodplain: None Mapped	Solar Access: Adequate
Erosion: Moderate to High	Solar Orientation: Adequate
Landslide: No	Hazardous Materials: No

SERVICES

Fire Protection: Aptos-La Selva Beach FPD	Drainage District: None
School District: PVUSD	Project Access: White Road
Sewage Disposal: Septic	Water Supply: Private Well

PLANNING POLICIES

Zone District: A	Special Designation:
General Plan: Mountain Residential	
Urban Services Line: <input type="checkbox"/> Inside	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Outside
Coastal Zone: <input type="checkbox"/> Inside	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Outside

PROJECT SETTING AND BACKGROUND:

The project site is located at the end of Nunes Road. The site is currently developed with a single-family dwelling, four sheds, barn, chicken coup and a pond, all located on gentle slopes in the southern portion of the site, near the entrance to the property. A large horse arena and associated access roadway have been graded on the moderate slope northeast of the existing improvements. Grading of the arena was terminated prior to completion due to lack of proper permits. Erosion control measures have been installed until permits can be obtained.

The site grades are characterized by very gentle slopes (~5%-10%) along the southern area of the site closest to Nunes Road which become steeper (~15%-20%) to the north, with 30% and above slopes near the northern property boundary. The southern slopes are absent of trees and vegetated with non-native grasses. Above these slopes the arena is mostly bare of vegetation, bordered by the northern slopes of the property, which support oak woodland. A man-made pond is located adjacent to Nunes Road, west of the developed structures and south of the partially constructed arena.

DETAILED PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

Proposal to recognize grading of 3,500 cubic yards of cut and 3,200 cubic yards of fill to construct a horse riding arena, and 80 cubic yards of cut and fill to build a horse stable. Requires a grading permit to cut an additional 500 cubic yards of material and fill 2,300 cubic yards of material to complete installation of the arena. A net total of 1,800 cubic yards of fill material will be imported to the site to complete the work. Grading permit also includes the removal and replacement of the fill beneath the as-built horse stable, resulting in an additional 45 cubic yards of cut and 45 cubic yards of fill. Project earthwork totals: 3,675 cubic yards of cut and 5,625 cubic yards of fill.

Significant Or Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less than Significant Or No Impact	Not Applicable
---	---	---	-------------------

III. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW CHECKLIST

A. Geology and Soils

Does the project have the potential to:

1. Expose people or structures to potential adverse effects, including the risk of material loss, injury, or death involving:

- A. Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or as identified by other substantial evidence?

_____ X _____

All of Santa Cruz County is subject to some hazard from earthquakes. The subject parcel is not located within the State or County fault zones. All of the proposed structures are non-habitable, so the exposure of people to potential effects of an earthquake is low.

- B. Seismic ground shaking?

_____ X _____

See comment A-1-a.

- C. Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?

_____ X _____

See comment A-1-a.

- D. Landslides?

_____ X _____

Landslides are not shown on this parcel on the Cooper-Clark Landslide maps. A geotechnical investigation (Dees and Associates, Project SCR-0254, 10/26/07) prepared for the project states that due to dense soils beneath the arena and stable as well as firm soils exposed in arena cut slopes, landsliding is not anticipated beneath the proposed improvements. Further, the geologic investigation (Nielsen and Associates, Project SCR-2017-G, 8/12/08) prepared for the subject project confirms that there is no evidence of past slope instability on the hillside directly above the arena and that site conditions strongly suggest that grading of the arena did not adversely affect the stability of the hillside.

Significant Or Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less than Significant Or No Impact	Not Applicable
---	---	---	-------------------

2. Subject people or improvements to damage from soil instability as a result of on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, to subsidence, liquefaction, or structural collapse?

		X	
--	--	---	--

See response to A.1.a., A.1.d, above.

3. Develop land with a slope exceeding 30%?

		X	
--	--	---	--

The proposed arena and stable are not located in areas exceeding 30% slope. The arena is located on gently sloping ground with slopes of approximately 20%. The existing stable is located on slopes of approximately 15%.

4. Result in soil erosion or the substantial loss of topsoil?

	X		
--	---	--	--

Any ground disturbance has the potential to create erosion, particularly with this amount of grading. The location of the proposed improvements on gentle slopes and the implementation of the erosion control plan (Attachment 2) will adequately control erosion in the proposed development. The erosion control plan incorporates silt fences on the downslope portions of the grading in addition to the erosion control blankets and straw wattles already installed on the existing cut and fill slopes. Topsoil removed during grading activities has been stockpiled onsite; the erosion control plan calls for distribution of this material on bare slopes as seed base after completion of grading. The current erosion control plan directs arena drainage to an energy dissipater; as a condition of approval, if granted, the final erosion control plan to be submitted with the building permit will incorporate an appropriately sized "lateral spreader" instead of the dissipater that will act to further reduce erosion potential by eliminating the drainage point source. Additionally, grading on this site will only be allowed in the dry season (April 15 through October 15).

An erosion control plan for grading in the vicinity of the as-built stable will be reviewed and approved as part of the building permit to recognize the structure.

5. Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial risks to property?

		X	
--	--	---	--

Expansive soils were not described in the Soils Survey of Santa Cruz County for the soil types listed for this property.

Significant Or Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less than Significant Or No Impact	Not Applicable
---	---	---	-------------------

- | | | | | | |
|----|--|-------|-------|-------|-------------|
| 6. | Place sewage disposal systems in areas dependent upon soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks, leach fields, or alternative waste water disposal systems? | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____X_____ |
|----|--|-------|-------|-------|-------------|

This project does not propose any sewage disposal systems.

- | | | | | | |
|----|----------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------------|
| 7. | Result in coastal cliff erosion? | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____X_____ |
|----|----------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------------|

Project site is not located adjacent to, or otherwise near, a coastal cliff.

B. Hydrology, Water Supply and Water Quality

Does the project have the potential to:

- | | | | | | |
|----|--|-------|-------|-------|-------------|
| 1. | Place development within a 100-year flood hazard area? | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____X_____ |
|----|--|-------|-------|-------|-------------|

Project site is not located within a floodway or floodplain.

- | | | | | | |
|----|---|-------|-------|-------|-------------|
| 2. | Place development within the floodway resulting in impedance or redirection of flood flows? | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____X_____ |
|----|---|-------|-------|-------|-------------|

See comment B-1.

- | | | | | | |
|----|--------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------------|
| 3. | Be inundated by a seiche or tsunami? | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____X_____ |
|----|--------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------------|

The project site is located approximately 3 miles from the coast, and therefore is not expected to be inundated by a seiche or tsunami.

- | | | | | | |
|----|---|-------|-------|-------------|-------|
| 4. | Deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit, or a significant contribution to an existing net deficit in available supply, or a significant lowering of the local groundwater table? | _____ | _____ | _____X_____ | _____ |
|----|---|-------|-------|-------------|-------|

A portion of the subject property is mapped in a ground-water resource area (See Attachment 1).

Significant Or Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less than Significant Or No Impact	Not Applicable
---	---	---	-------------------

The existing drainage pattern will not be significantly altered by the proposed project, and no runoff will be diverted to a different drainage basin. Currently drainage onsite sheet flows toward the lower portion of the property. Runoff will increase as a result of the compacted arena surface having a lower infiltration rate. However, the proposed drainage system will collect and convey runoff to the lower portion of the property where it will be captured for recharge. Runoff from along the eastern portion of the arena and the stable area will have drainage characteristics similar to what currently exists.

The Department of Public Works Drainage section has reviewed and accepted the proposed drainage plan (Attachment 2).

5. Degrade a public or private water supply? (Including the contribution of urban contaminants, nutrient enrichments, or other agricultural chemicals or seawater intrusion).

X

See comment B-4. Additionally a manure management plan will be reviewed and approved prior to building permit issuance to ensure that the presence of manure will not impact the water supply. No commercial or industrial activities are proposed that would generate a significant amount of contaminants to a public or private water supply. Potential siltation from the proposed project and erosion control mitigation measures are discussed in comment A-4.

6. Degrade septic system functioning?

X

See comment A-6. The proposed project will not include the installation of a septic system. The existing septic system on the parcel is located near the residence, greater than 80 feet downgrade of the horse arena.

7. Alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which could result in flooding, erosion, or siltation on or off-site?

X

See comment B-4. Potential siltation from the proposed project and erosion control mitigation measures are discussed in comment A-4.

Significant Or Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less than Significant Or No Impact	Not Applicable
---	---	---	-------------------

8. Create or contribute runoff which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned storm water drainage systems, or create additional source(s) of polluted runoff?

X

There may be an incremental increase in runoff as a result of the less permeable compacted arena surface; however, this is not expected to exceed the capacity of any existing infrastructure. See comment A-4.

9. Contribute to flood levels or erosion in natural water courses by discharges of newly collected runoff?

X

See comments A-4 and B-7.

10. Otherwise substantially degrade water supply or quality?

X

Implementation of the erosion control plan (Attachment 2) as well as the manure management plan will help to limit impacts to water supply or water quality.

C. Biological Resources

Does the project have the potential to:

1. Have an adverse effect on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species, in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game, or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?

X

County Environmental Planning staff determined that due to the nature of the vegetation in the area and presence of a small pond, the site may constitute potential habitat for the Santa Cruz long-toed salamander (*Ambystoma macrodactylum* croceum), a species which is both state and federally listed as endangered. A habitat assessment for this species was prepared by wildlife biologist Dana Bland (Attachment 3) to determine if the installation of the arena had created any barrier to salamander movement between the potential upland habitat in the oak woodland north of the arena and the potential breeding pond to the south. The assessment determined that the site does provide suitable upland habitat, but the quality of breeding habitat in the pond are

Significant Or Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less than Significant Or No Impact	Not Applicable
---	---	---	-------------------

questionable due to the presence of predator species. The assessment concluded that the grading did not remove any oak woodland habitat, and did not have any direct nor indirect impacts to the pond due to the distance between the development and the pond as well as the installation of effective erosion control measures. The use of the arena is not expected to prevent any barriers to salamander movement between the oak woodland and the pond since the arena will be enclosed with "corral" type fencing without ground level barriers. Furthermore, the arena will only be used during the daytime in fair weather, which is not expected to inhibit salamander travel to the breeding pond habitat, as they normally travel during rainy winter nights. In order to preserve the existing salamander habitat, the following mitigations would be imposed, per the habitat assessment approval letter issued by the County (see Attachment 4): (a) No oak woodland, riparian vegetation, or scrub habitat shall be removed in the future without first conducting environmental review, (b) Non-native broom shall be removed from the project site, (c) Native needle grass and blue-eyed grass on the west end of the grassland shall be left undisturbed from disking or other ground disturbance activities, and (d) Revegetation shall occur with native grasses, particularly native needle grass and blue-eyed grass.

2. Have an adverse effect on a sensitive biotic community (riparian corridor), wetland, native grassland, special forests, inter-tidal zone, etc.)?

X

The proposed arena is located approximately 250 feet from the onsite pond and 450 feet from the unnamed tributary to Harkins Slough. As stated in response C.1, the grading has had no direct or indirect impact to the onsite pond due to its distance from the proposed work as well as proper use of effective erosion control measures. Similarly, the existing and proposed grading is not anticipated to affect the unnamed tributary to Harkins Slough.

The maximum riparian setback required from a perennial stream or body of water is 60' (50' plus 10' construction setback) per County Code Section 16.30.040. All of the proposed improvements are located at least 250' from the pond and 450' from the top of bank of the perennial stream.

Erosion control and manure management plans for the project will be reviewed and approved prior to building permit issuance. Implementation of these plans will further reduce the potential for the sedimentation generated by the proposed work and future manure production to impact nearby water bodies. (See comment A-4)

	Significant Or Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less than Significant Or No Impact	Not Applicable
3. Interfere with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species, or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native or migratory wildlife nursery sites?	_____	_____X_____	_____	_____

See response to C.1, above.

4. Produce nighttime lighting that will illuminate animal habitats?	_____	_____	_____	_____X_____
---	-------	-------	-------	-------------

Exterior lighting is not proposed with this project.

5. Make a significant contribution to the reduction of the number of species of plants or animals?	_____	_____X_____	_____	_____
--	-------	-------------	-------	-------

See response to C-1, above.

6. Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources (such as the Significant Tree Protection Ordinance, Sensitive Habitat Ordinance, provisions of the Design Review ordinance protecting trees with trunk sizes of 6 inch diameters or greater)?	_____	_____	_____X_____	_____
---	-------	-------	-------------	-------

As stated in C.1 above, portions of the parcel have been identified as potential upland habitat and breeding areas for the Santa Cruz Long-Toed Salamander and are identified as "sensitive habitat" per the Santa Cruz County Sensitive Habitat Ordinance (Chapter 16.32). The proposed project scope is in substantial conformance with the ordinance as follows: The existing and proposed work on the property constitutes a total site disturbance of approximately 6.5% of the total parcel area, which meets the pre- and post-re-vegetation maximums of 25% and 15% for total lot disturbance and the 10% impervious surface maximum set forth in the code. As concluded in the habitat assessment (Dana Bland, 2/4/08, Attachment 3), no trees were removed as part of the existing development, and none are proposed in the final phase of the project. None of the proposed development will impede the salamanders' use of nor negatively impact the oak woodland or pond. Project mitigations include the removal of non-native plant species and re-vegetation of disturbed areas with native species, as required by County Code.

Significant Or Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less than Significant Or No Impact	Not Applicable
---	---	---	-------------------

7. Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Biotic Conservation Easement, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?

_____ X _____

There are no conservation plans or biotic conservation easements in effect or planned in the project vicinity.

Significant Or Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less than Significant Or No Impact	Not Applicable
---	---	---	-------------------

D. Energy and Natural Resources

Does the project have the potential to:

- | | | | | |
|--|-------|-------|-------|-------------|
| 1. Affect or be affected by land designated as "Timber Resources" by the General Plan? | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____X_____ |
|--|-------|-------|-------|-------------|

The project site does not contain any designated timber resources.

- | | | | | |
|---|-------|-------|-------------|-------|
| 2. Affect or be affected by lands currently utilized for agriculture, or designated in the General Plan for agricultural use? | _____ | _____ | _____X_____ | _____ |
|---|-------|-------|-------------|-------|

The project site does not contain any designated agricultural resources. Noncommercial boarding of horses and corrals are allowable agricultural uses.

- | | | | | |
|--|-------|-------|-------|-------------|
| 3. Encourage activities that result in the use of large amounts of fuel, water, or energy, or use of these in a wasteful manner? | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____X_____ |
|--|-------|-------|-------|-------------|

The project will not involve the use of large amounts of fuel, water, and energy, or the use of these resources in a wasteful manner.

- | | | | | |
|---|-------|-------|-------|-------------|
| 4. Have a substantial effect on the potential use, extraction, or depletion of a natural resource (i.e., minerals or energy resources)? | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____X_____ |
|---|-------|-------|-------|-------------|

The project will not include or require the substantial extraction or consumption of minerals, energy resources, or other natural resources.

E. Visual Resources and Aesthetics

Does the project have the potential to:

- | | | | | |
|--|-------|-------|-------|-------------|
| 1. Have an adverse effect on a scenic resource, including visual obstruction of that resource? | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____X_____ |
|--|-------|-------|-------|-------------|

The parcel is not located within a scenic corridor and the proposed work is not visible from a scenic road or scenic corridor.

Significant Or Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less than Significant Or No Impact	Not Applicable
---	---	---	-------------------

2. Substantially damage scenic resources, within a designated scenic corridor or public view shed area including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings? _____ X _____

See comment E-1. The project as designed does not damage scenic resources such as trees, rock outcroppings or historic buildings.

3. Degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings, including substantial change in topography or ground surface relief features, and/or development on a ridge line? _____ X _____

See comment E-1. The slopes in the area of the proposed work are approximately 20%. The area of the riding arena is where most of the grading is to occur. The proposed grading for the arena will not result in a substantial change in topography. The proposed grading will be blended into the existing topography.

The proposed riding area is located on the flattest portion of the site. Grading to create a level arena would be unavoidable anywhere on the parcel and is minimized in it's current location.

Most parcels adjacent to this parcel are between 15 and 20 acres, and the neighboring parcel to the east currently has horse boarding facilities as well as attendant corral facilities. The proposed use on this parcel is consistent with neighborhood uses.

4. Create a new source of light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area? _____ X _____

No windows or new light sources are proposed with the development.

5. Destroy, cover, or modify any unique geologic or physical feature? _____ X _____

There are no unique geological features on or adjacent to the site that would be destroyed, modified or covered by the project.

Significant Or Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less than Significant Or No Impact	Not Applicable
---	---	---	-------------------

F. Cultural Resources

Does the project have the potential to:

1. Cause an adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in CEQA Guidelines 15064.5? _____ X

No designated historical resources are present on the project site.

2. Cause an adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to CEQA Guidelines 15064.5? _____ X

The existing condition of the areas affected by proposed grading is disturbed. The scope of proposed grading is to stabilize the disturbed area and does not include significant excavation in undisturbed areas. Therefore, the proposed work is not likely to impact potential archaeological resources.

Pursuant to Chapter 16.40.040 of the Santa Cruz County Code, if at any time during site preparation, excavation, or other ground disturbance associated with this project, any human remains of any age, or any artifact or other evidence of a Native American cultural site which reasonably appears to exceed 100 years of age are discovered, the responsible persons shall immediately cease and desist from all further site excavation and notify the sheriff-coroner and the Planning Director. If the coroner determines that the remains are not of recent origin, a full archeological report shall be prepared and representatives of the local Native California Indian group shall be contacted. Disturbance shall not resume until the significance of the archeological resource is determined and appropriate mitigations to preserve the resource on the site are established.

Pursuant to Section 16.40.040 of the Santa Cruz County Code, if at any time during site preparation, excavation, or other ground disturbance associated with this project, human remains are discovered, the responsible persons shall immediately cease and desist from all further site excavation and notify the Sheriff-Coroner and the Planning Director. If the Coroner determines that the remains are not of recent origin, a full archeological report shall be prepared and representatives of the local Native California Indian group shall be contacted. Disturbance shall not resume until the significance of the archeological resource is determined and appropriate mitigations to preserve the resource on the site are established.

Significant Or Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less than Significant Or No Impact	Not Applicable
---	---	---	-------------------

3. Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries? _____ X

The presence of human remains has not been identified on the project site.

4. Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site? _____ X

No paleontological resources have been identified on the project site.

G. Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Does the project have the potential to:

1. Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment as a result of the routine transport, storage, use, or disposal of hazardous materials, not including gasoline or other motor fuels? _____ X

The proposed project will not involve handling or storage of hazardous materials.

2. Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment? _____ X

The project site is not listed as a known hazardous materials site.

3. Create a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area as a result of dangers from aircraft using a public or private airport located within two miles of the project site? _____ X

The parcel and the project are not located within the Airport Clear Zones and safety hazards for people residing in the project area are low.

Significant Or Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less than Significant Or No Impact	Not Applicable
---	---	---	-------------------

4. Expose people to electro-magnetic fields associated with electrical transmission lines?

X

An overhead distribution power line runs across the southern portion of the property (along Nunes Road), but there are no high-voltage transmission lines.

5. Create a potential fire hazard?

X

The project design will incorporate all applicable fire safety code requirements and will include fire protection devices as required by the local fire agency.

6. Release bio-engineered organisms or chemicals into the air outside of project buildings?

X

The project will not involve processes that could result in the release of bio-engineered organisms or chemical agents.

Significant Or Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less than Significant Or No Impact	Not Applicable
---	---	---	-------------------

H. Transportation/Traffic

Does the project have the potential to:

1. Cause an increase in traffic that is substantial in relation to the existing traffic load and capacity of the street system (i.e., substantial increase in either the number of vehicle trips, the volume to capacity ratio on roads, or congestion at intersections)?

X

No commercial use of the facilities is permitted as part of this project, and no additional dwelling units are proposed; therefore, traffic from the proposed project is not anticipated to substantially affect the existing traffic load and capacity of streets and intersections in the project vicinity.

2. Cause an increase in parking demand which cannot be accommodated by existing parking facilities?

X

Adequate parking exists on the project site for the proposed project.

3. Increase hazards to motorists, bicyclists, or pedestrians?

X

See comment H-1.

4. Exceed, either individually (the project alone) or cumulatively (the project combined with other development), a level of service standard established by the county congestion management agency for designated intersections, roads or highways?

X

See comment H-1.

Significant Or Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less than Significant Or No Impact	Not Applicable
---	---	---	-------------------

I. Noise

Does the project have the potential to:

1. Generate a permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?

_____ X _____

The addition of the noise associated with the proposed project will not create a significant permanent increase in the noise levels in the project vicinity.

2. Expose people to noise levels in excess of standards established in the General Plan, or applicable standards of other agencies?

_____ X _____

Noise levels at the project site are not anticipated to exceed established standards.

3. Generate a temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?

_____ X _____

Noise generated during construction for the proposed project will temporarily increase the ambient noise levels for adjoining areas, but is consistent with the type of equipment-related noise found in an agricultural setting.

J. Air Quality

Does the project have the potential to:

1. Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?

_____ X _____

The North Central Coast Air Basin does not meet State standards for ozone and particulate matter (PM10). Therefore, the regional pollutants of concern that would be emitted by the project are ozone precursors (Volatile Organic Compounds [VOCs] and nitrogen oxides [NOx]), and dust.

No new traffic will be generated by the project, thus there is no indication that new emissions of VOCs or NOx will exceed Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District (MBUAPCD) thresholds for these pollutants and therefore there will not be a significant contribution to an existing air quality violation.

Significant Or Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less than Significant Or No Impact	Not Applicable
---	---	---	-------------------

Project construction may result in a short-term, localized decrease in air quality due to generation of dust. However, standard dust control best management practices, such as periodic watering, will be implemented during construction to reduce impacts to a less than significant level.

2. Conflict with or obstruct implementation of an adopted air quality plan?

_____ X _____

The project will not conflict with or obstruct implementation of the regional air quality plan. See J-1 above.

3. Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?

_____ X _____

See J-1 above. Most parcels adjacent to this parcel are between 15 and 20 acres; due to the low residential density in the area, significant exposure to sensitive receptors is not anticipated.

4. Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?

_____ X _____

The proposed project includes a proposed stable to be used for the storage of horses. A manure management plan will be prepared and reviewed by Environmental Health prior to building permit issuance, which should limit objectionable odors. Additionally, most parcels adjacent to this parcel are between 15 and 20 acres and the odors from the four horses anticipated to be housed onsite are not expected to affect a substantial number of people.

Significant Or Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less than Significant Or No Impact	Not Applicable
---	---	---	-------------------

K. Public Services and Utilities

Does the project have the potential to:

1. Result in the need for new or physically altered public facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives for any of the public services:

a. Fire protection? _____ X _____

While the project represents an incremental contribution to the need for services, this project meets the standards and requirements of the local fire agency. The project will include all fire safety features required by the local fire agency.

b. Police protection? _____ X _____

No additional housing is proposed; the project will not create a significant demand for new services, nor will it require additional personnel.

c. Schools? _____ X _____

This project is not creating additional housing so an incremental contribution to the need for school services does not exist.

d. Parks or other recreational activities? _____ X _____

The project will not create a significant demand for new services.

e. Other public facilities; including the maintenance of roads? _____ X _____

Capital improvement fees for the proposed development help offset the impacts of the incremental increase in public facilities usage and needs generated by the project.

Significant Or Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less than Significant Or No Impact	Not Applicable
---	---	---	-------------------

2. Result in the need for construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?

_____ X _____

Storm water will be dispersed on-site. No increase in impact to existing storm water facilities is anticipated.

3. Result in the need for construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?

_____ X _____

The project site has an onsite well which is adequate to accommodate the relatively light demands of this project. The project will not necessitate expansion of wastewater facilities.

4. Cause a violation of wastewater treatment standards of the Regional Water Quality Control Board?

_____ X _____

The parcel's wastewater flows will not increase due to this project and will not cause a violation of wastewater treatment standards.

5. Create a situation in which water supplies are inadequate to serve the project or provide fire protection?

_____ X _____

The proposed project will not increase the intensity nor alter the nature of the existing site use and the water service will be adequate for fire suppression at the site. Additionally, the local fire agency has reviewed the plans, and will review and approve the plans prior to issuing a building permit for the project assuring conformity with fire protection standards.

6. Result in inadequate access for fire protection?

_____ X _____

The existing project access to be maintained is in conformance with local fire agency requirements.

Significant Or Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less than Significant Or No Impact	Not Applicable
---	---	---	-------------------

7. Make a significant contribution to a cumulative reduction of landfill capacity or ability to properly dispose of refuse?

X

No significant change in the intensity or nature of the existing use is proposed. No additional waste production is anticipated.

8. Result in a breach of federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste management?

X

The project will not include any activity that would result in a breach of statutes or regulations related to solid waste management.

L. Land Use, Population, and Housing

Does the project have the potential to:

1. Conflict with any policy of the County adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?

X

General Plan Sections 6.3.9 and 8.2.2, as well as Code Section 16.22.050 require site design to minimize grading. The majority of this project is for the purpose of creating a level riding arena. There are no existing level areas on the parcel which are large enough to site the entire riding arena without significant amounts of grading. The riding arena has, however, been sited on the portion of the parcel with the gentlest slopes (approximate average of 15-20%). Approximately 3,675 cubic yards of cut and 5,625 cubic yards of fill will be required for this project. Given the slope constraints, the riding arena has been located in an area where the least amount of grading will be required.

2. Conflict with any County Code regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?

X

Refer to L-1.

3. Physically divide an established community?

X

Significant Or Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less than Significant Or No Impact	Not Applicable
---	---	---	-------------------

The project will not include any element that will physically divide an established community.

4. Have a potentially significant growth inducing effect, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?

X

The proposed project is designed with current General Plan and Zoning designations of the parcel. There is not an increase in housing associated with this project.

The proposed project does not involve extensions of utilities such as water, sewer, or new road systems into areas not designated for such services and is consistent with the County General Plan. The project will not include any substantial growth that is not consistent with County planning goals.

5. Displace substantial numbers of people, or amount of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?

X

The proposed project will not entail a gain of or demolition of housing units.

M. Non-Local Approvals

Does the project require approval of federal, state, or regional agencies?

Yes _____ No X

N. Mandatory Findings of Significance

1. Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant, animal, or natural community, or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?

Yes _____ No X

2. Does the project have the potential to achieve short term, to the disadvantage of long-term environmental goals? (A short term impact on the environment is one which occurs in a relatively brief, definitive period of time while long term impacts endure well into the future)

Yes _____ No X

3. Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable ("cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, and the effects of reasonably foreseeable future projects which have entered the Environmental Review stage)?

Yes _____ No X

4. Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?

Yes _____ No X

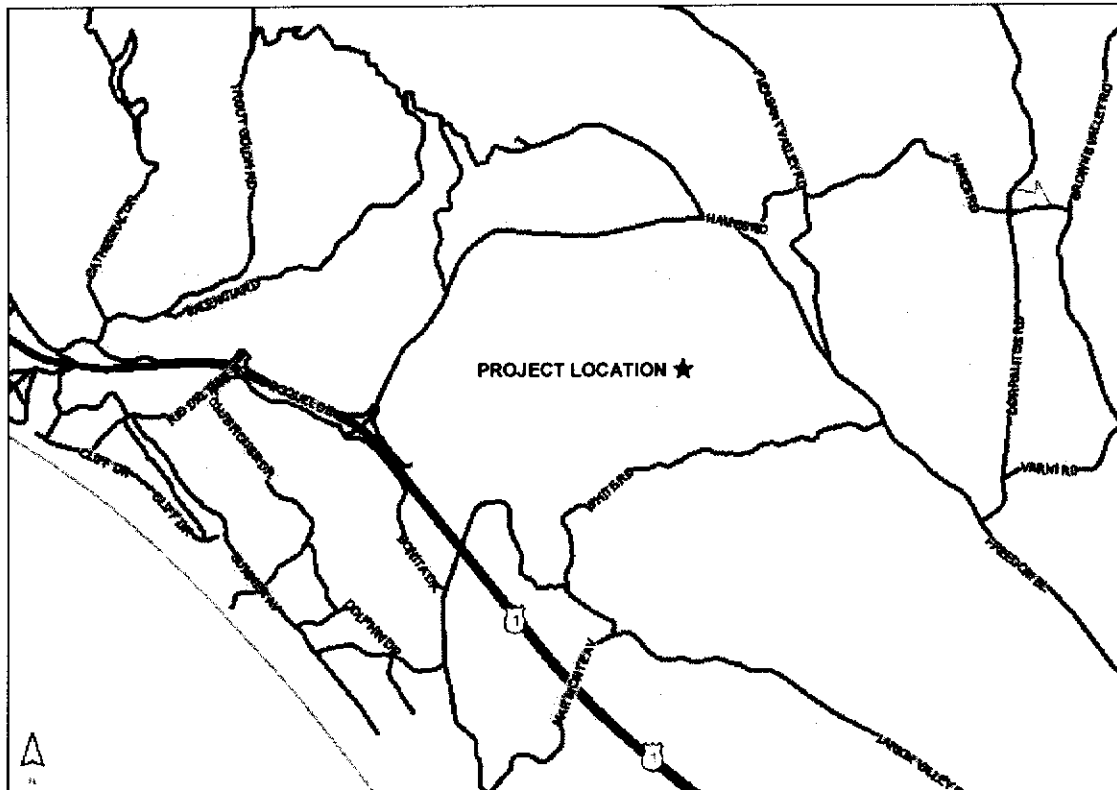
TECHNICAL REVIEW CHECKLIST

	<u>REQUIRED</u>	<u>COMPLETED*</u>	<u>N/A</u>
Agricultural Policy Advisory Commission (APAC) Review	_____	_____	<u>X</u>
Archaeological Review	_____	_____	<u>X</u>
Biotic Report/Assessment (Attachment 3)	_____	<u>X</u>	_____
Geologic Hazards Assessment (GHA)	_____	_____	<u>X</u>
Geologic Report (On-file with County Planning Department)	_____	<u>X</u>	_____
Geotechnical (Soils) Report (On-file with County Planning Department)	_____	<u>X</u>	_____
Riparian Pre-Site	_____	_____	<u>X</u>
Septic Lot Check	_____	_____	<u>X</u>
Other:	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____

Attachments:

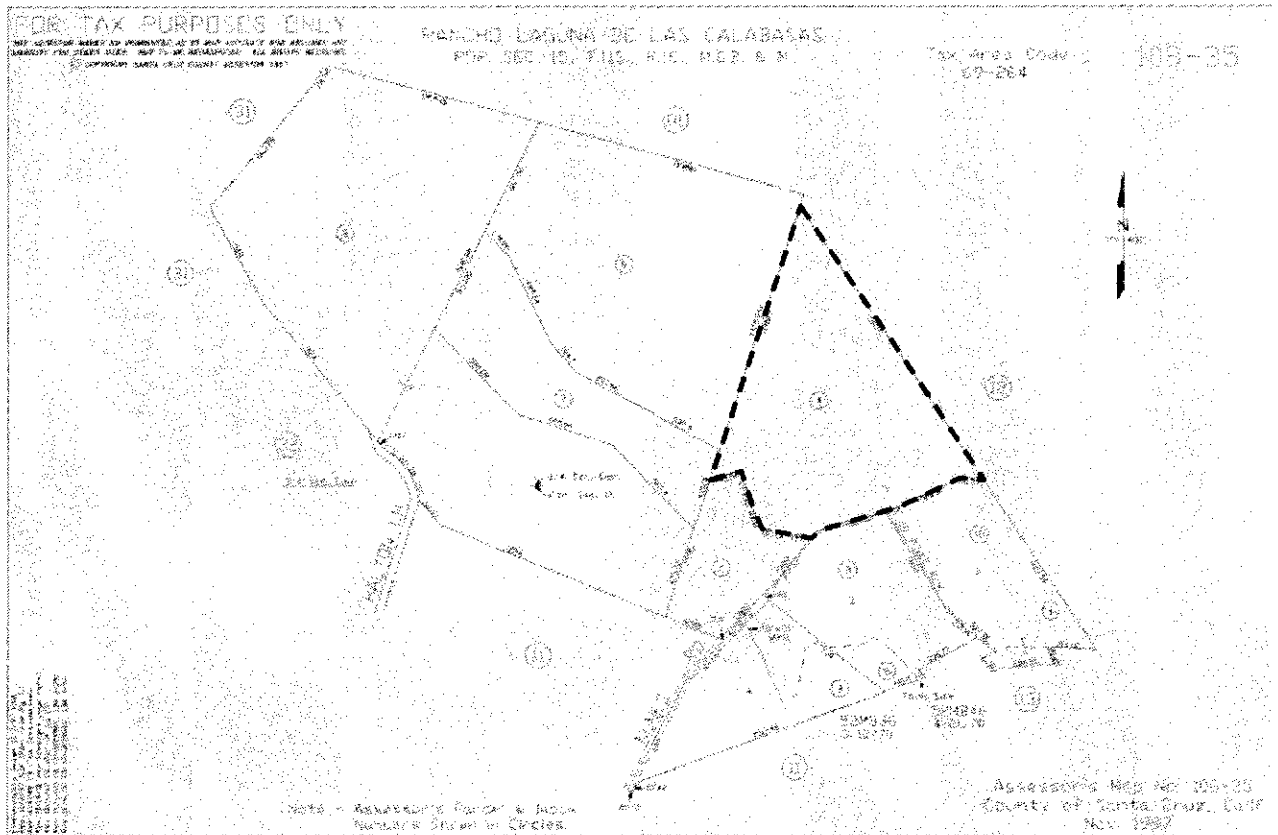
1. Project Maps
 - a. Vicinity Map
 - b. Map of General Plan Designations
 - c. Assessor Parcel Map
 - d. Map of Zoning Districts
 - e. Groundwater Recharge Area
2. Project Plans, dated March, 2008 by Luke R. Beautz, C.E., L.S.
3. "Habitat Assessment for Santa Cruz Long-Toed Salamander at Reap Property", by Dana Bland & Associates, dated February 04, 2008
4. Habitat Assessment Approval Letter, by Matt Johnston, Resource Planner, dated May 13, 2008

VICINITY MAP
REAP PROPERTY
107 NUNES ROAD, WATSONVILLE
APN 108-351-04

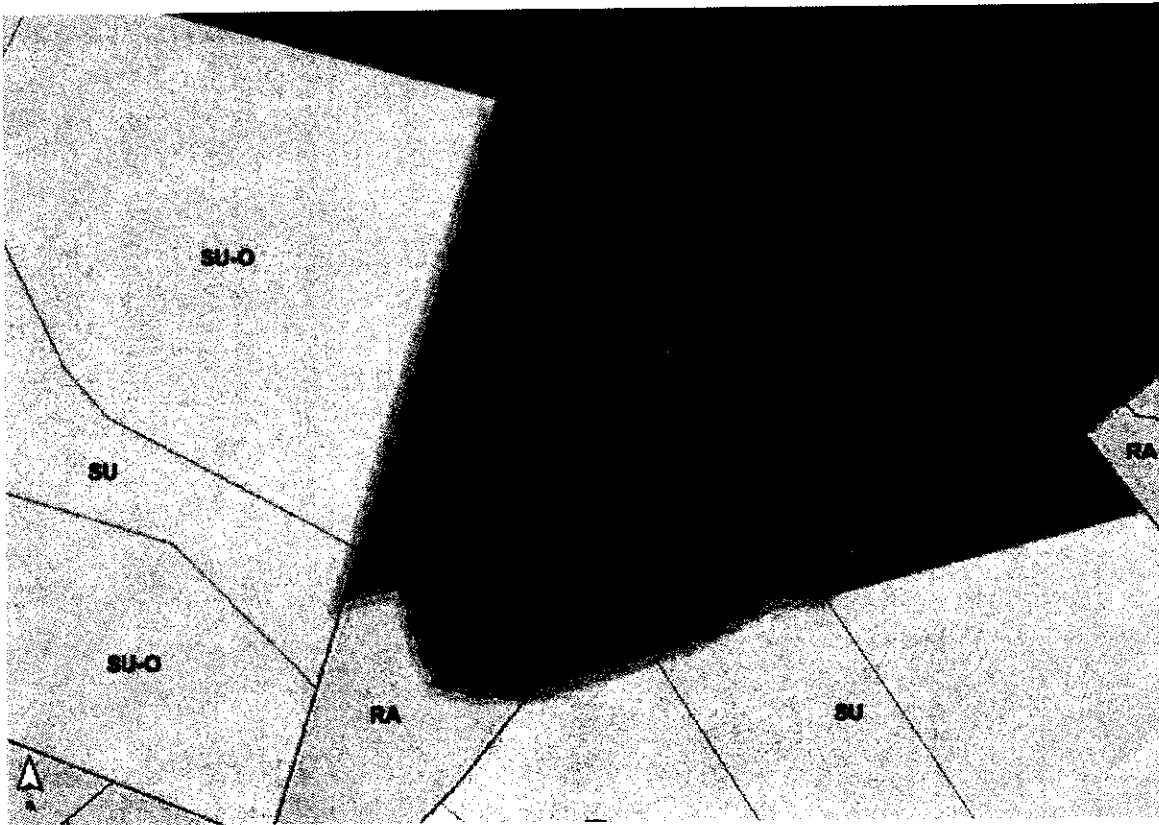


[illegible]

ASSESSOR PARCEL MAP
107 NUNES ROAD, WATSONVILLE
APN 108-351-04



MAP OF ZONING DISTRICTS
107 NUNES ROAD, WATSONVILLE
APN 108-351-04



GROUNDWATER RECHARGE AREA
(Designated Recharge Areas shown in blue)



GRADING PLAN

A.P.N. 108-351-04
 LOCATION: 107 NUNES ROAD
 WATSONVILLE, CA 95076
 GENERAL PLAN USE: RURAL RESIDENTIAL
 ZONING: A
 PURPOSE OF PROJECT: RESOLVE EXISTING RED TAG
 AND COMPLETE CONSTRUCTION
 OWNER: PATRICIA T. REAP
 P.O. BOX 1043
 FREEDOM, CA 95076

INDEX TO SHEETS

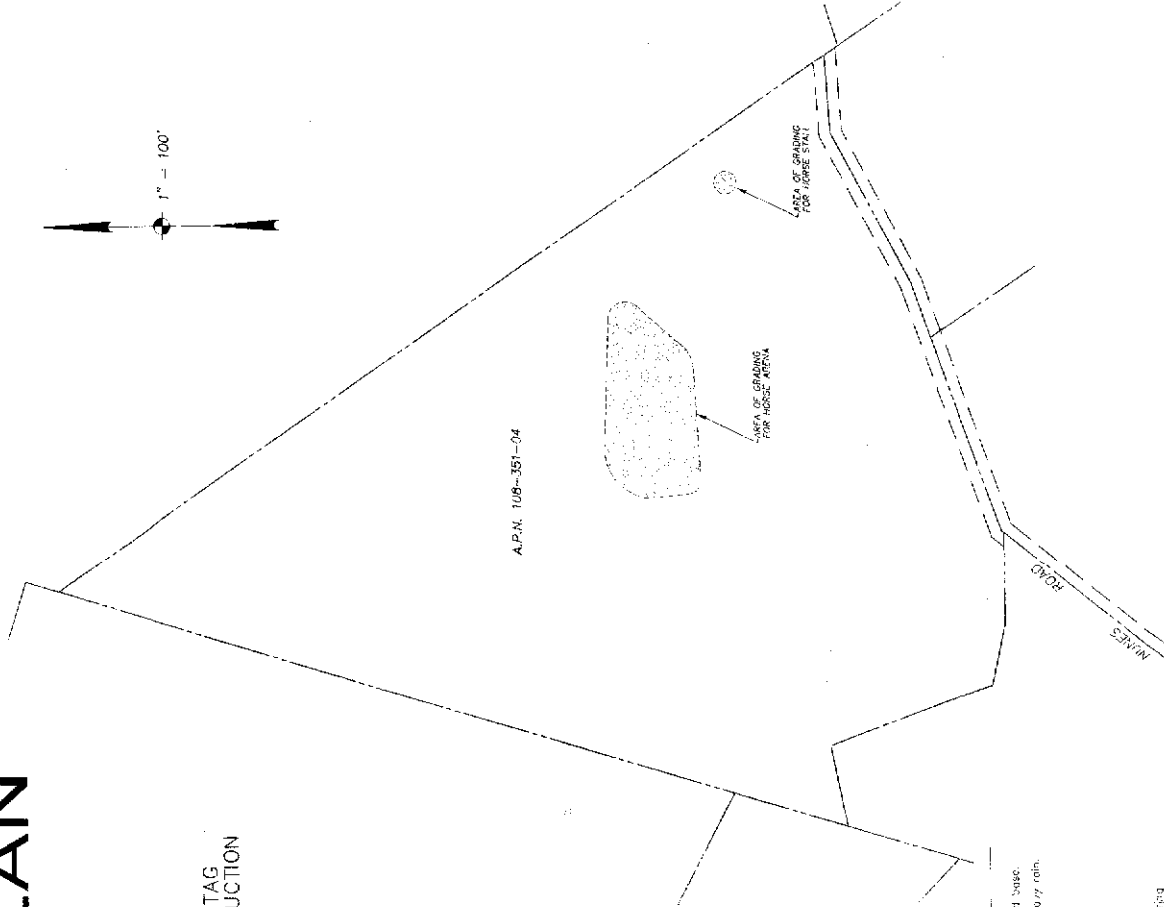
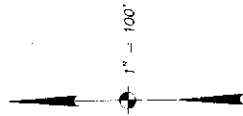
- SHEET C1 SITE INFORMATION, VICINITY MAP, SHEET INDEX, GENERAL NOTES, AND EROSION CONTROL NOTES
- SHEET C2 APPROXIMATE ORIGINAL SITE
- SHEET C3 EXISTING SITE
- SHEET C4 PROPOSED SITE
- SHEET C5 SITE SECTIONS
- SHEET C6 EROSION CONTROL PLAN
- SHEET C7 APPROXIMATE ORIGINAL SITE, EXISTING SITE, AND PROPOSED SITE & EROSION CONTROL FOR HORSE STALL
- SHEET C8 DRAINAGE ANALYSIS AND CALCULATIONS

GENERAL NOTES

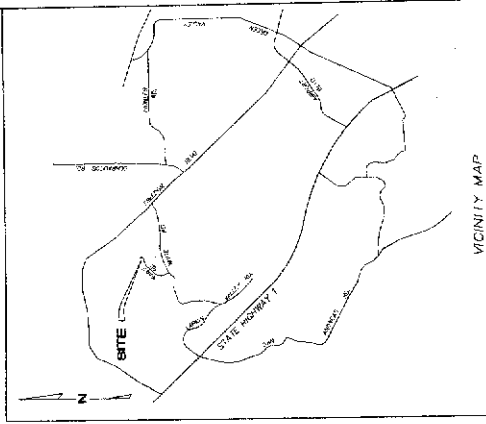
1. All construction shall comply with applicable requirements in the current edition of the Santa Cruz County Grading Ordinance and the Santa Cruz County Grading Ordinance.
2. All changes in the approved plans shall be made without prior approval by the Santa Cruz County Planning Department.
3. The Director of Planning, or its authorized representative, shall have the authority to stop work if the work is not being done in accordance with the approved improvement plans.
4. The contractor shall notify the Santa Cruz County Planning Department (454-2580 or 454-2077) at least 24 hours prior to the start of construction.
5. All construction shall comply with the recommendations of the erosion control report prepared by Dues & Associates, Inc., Project No. SDP-0254.
6. All material shall be placed in lifts not exceeding 6" in thickness and shall be compacted to a minimum of 90% R.C.
7. No seed clover, grading or excavating shall take place between October 15 & April 15 unless a separate winter seeding permit is issued by the Planning Department.

EROSION CONTROL NOTES

1. A 10' wide strip, topsoil and subsoil, shall be placed around the finished site on slopes as noted.
2. A 10' wide strip, topsoil and subsoil, shall be placed around the finished site on slopes as noted.
3. A 10' wide strip, topsoil and subsoil, shall be placed around the finished site on slopes as noted.
4. A 10' wide strip, topsoil and subsoil, shall be placed around the finished site on slopes as noted.
5. A 10' wide strip, topsoil and subsoil, shall be placed around the finished site on slopes as noted.
6. A 10' wide strip, topsoil and subsoil, shall be placed around the finished site on slopes as noted.
7. A 10' wide strip, topsoil and subsoil, shall be placed around the finished site on slopes as noted.
8. A 10' wide strip, topsoil and subsoil, shall be placed around the finished site on slopes as noted.
9. A 10' wide strip, topsoil and subsoil, shall be placed around the finished site on slopes as noted.
10. A 10' wide strip, topsoil and subsoil, shall be placed around the finished site on slopes as noted.



A.P.N. 108-351-04



VICINITY MAP
 NOT TO SCALE



GRADING PLAN
 FOR THE PROPOSED SITE CONSTRUCTION OF A
 HORSE AREA ON LANDS DESCRIBED IN THE DEED TO
 PATRICIA T. REAP
 BY RECORDER'S DOCUMENT NO. 2007-0014647
 SAN JUAN CRUZ COUNTY, CALIFORNIA
 SCALE: AS NOTED
 DATE: AUGUST 2008
 DTD: LUYA R. REUTZ, C.E., I.S.
 A.P.N. 108-351-04

C1

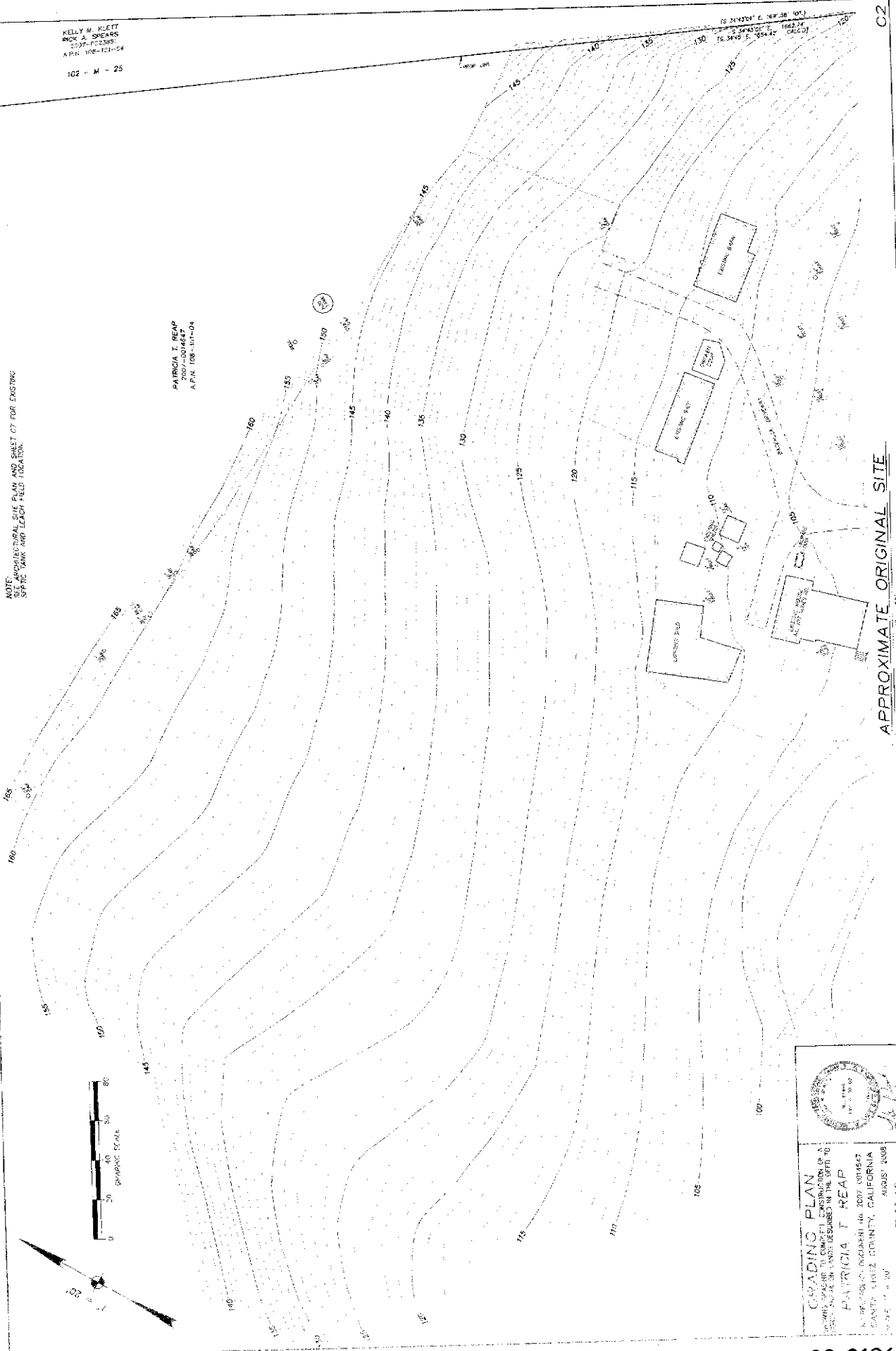
08-0196

KELLY M. KLETT
 ROCK A. SPEARS
 2007-10-23-05
 APR. 108-103-54

102 - M - 25

NOTE:
 SEE ARCHITECTURAL SHEET PLAN AND SHEET C7 FOR EXISTING
 SEPTIC TANK AND LEACH FIELD LOCATION.

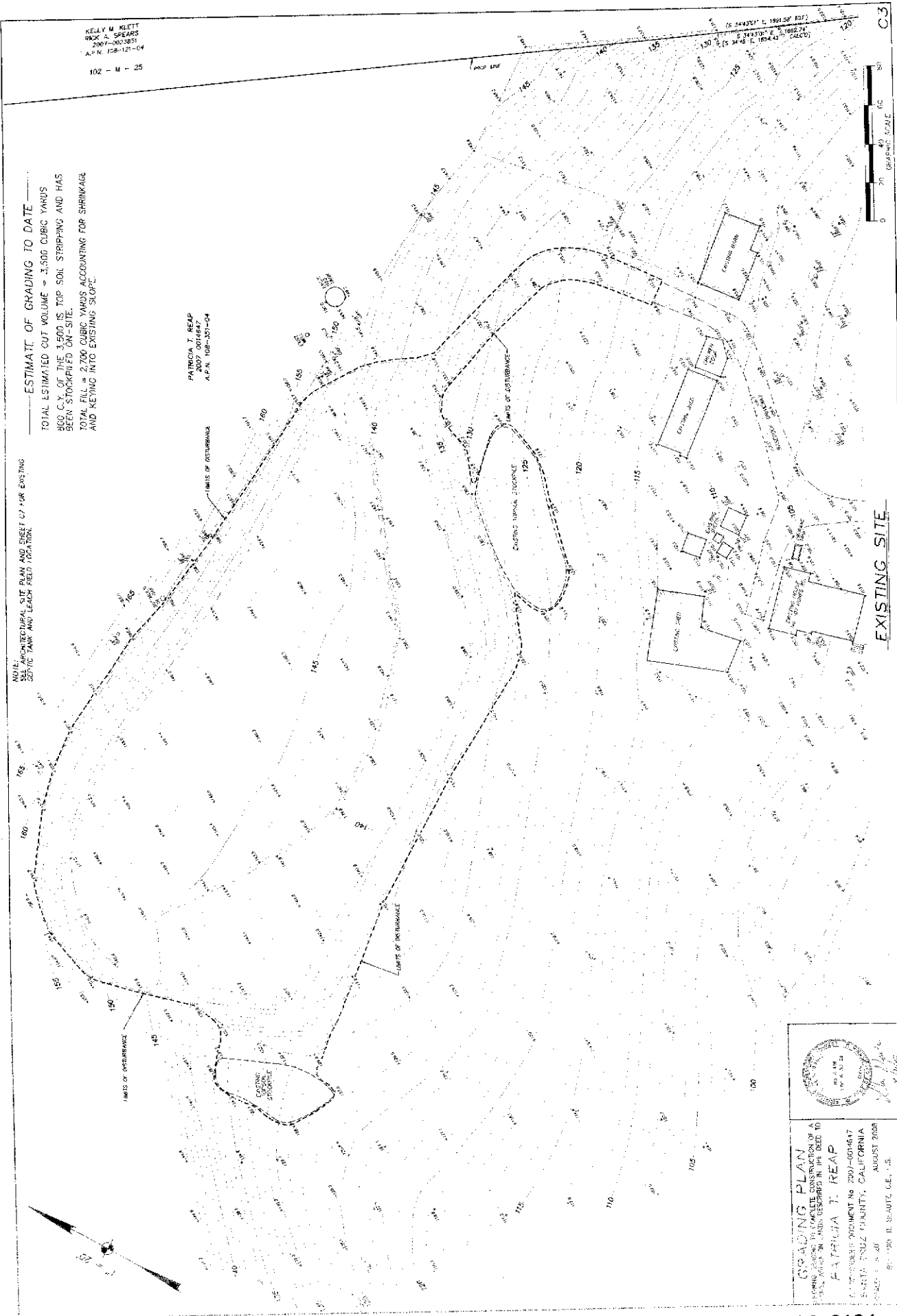
PATRICIA T. REAP
 7007-10145-27
 APR. 108-103-04



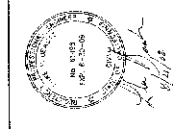
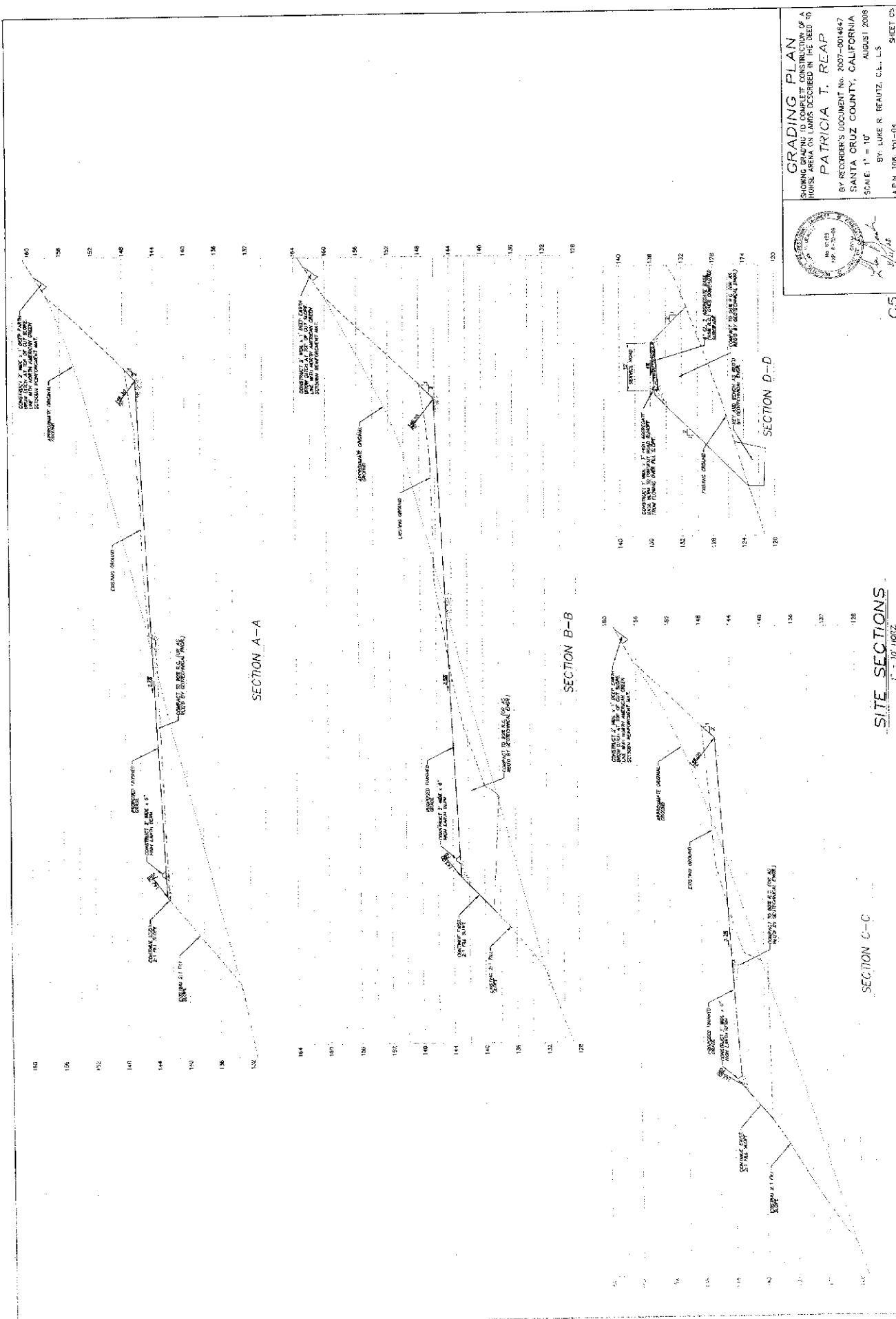
APPROXIMATE ORIGINAL SITE

GRADING PLAN SANTA CRUZ COUNTY, CALIFORNIA PATRICIA T. REAP AUGUST 2008 SHEET C2	

08-0196



08-0196

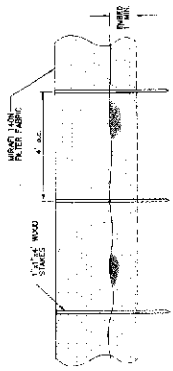


GRADING PLAN
 SHOWING GRADING TO COMPLETE CONSTRUCTION OF A
 HOUSE ARENA ON LANDS DESCRIBED IN THE DEED TO
PATRICIA T. REAP
 BY RECORDER'S DOCUMENT NO. 2007-0014847
 SANTA CRUZ COUNTY, CALIFORNIA
 SCALE: 1" = 10'
 BY: LUKE R. BEAUTZ, C.E., L.S.
 A.P.N. 108-391-04
 SHEET 05

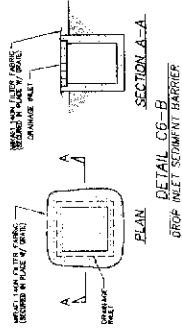
SITE SECTIONS
 1" = 10' 10/27

KELLY M. KLETT
 RICK A. SPEARS
 2207-0023551
 A.P.N. 108-127-04

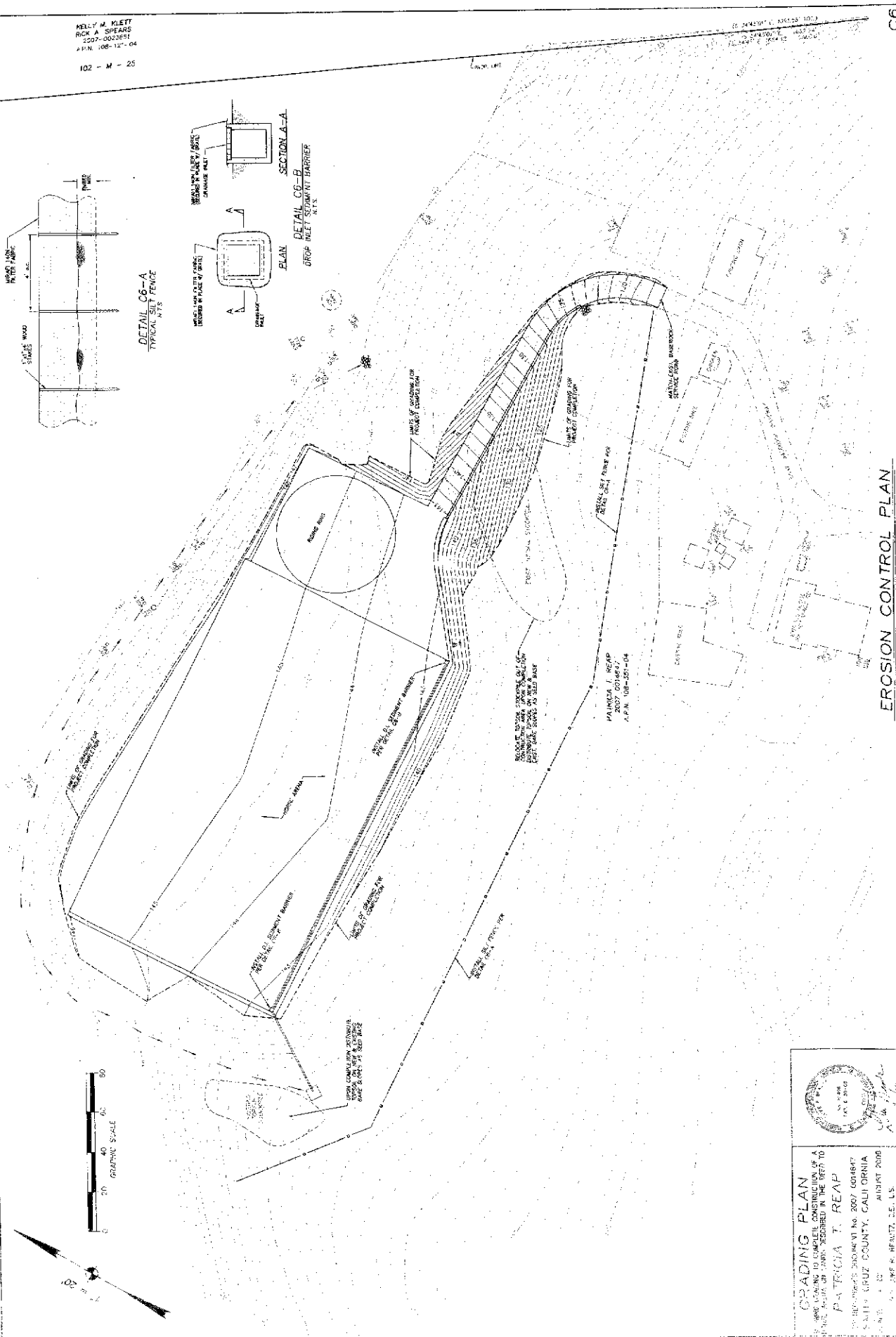
102 - M - 25



DETAIL C6-A
 TYPICAL SILT FENCE
 N.T.S.



DETAIL C6-B
 GRAP INLET SEDIMENT BARRIER
 N.T.S.



EROSION CONTROL PLAN

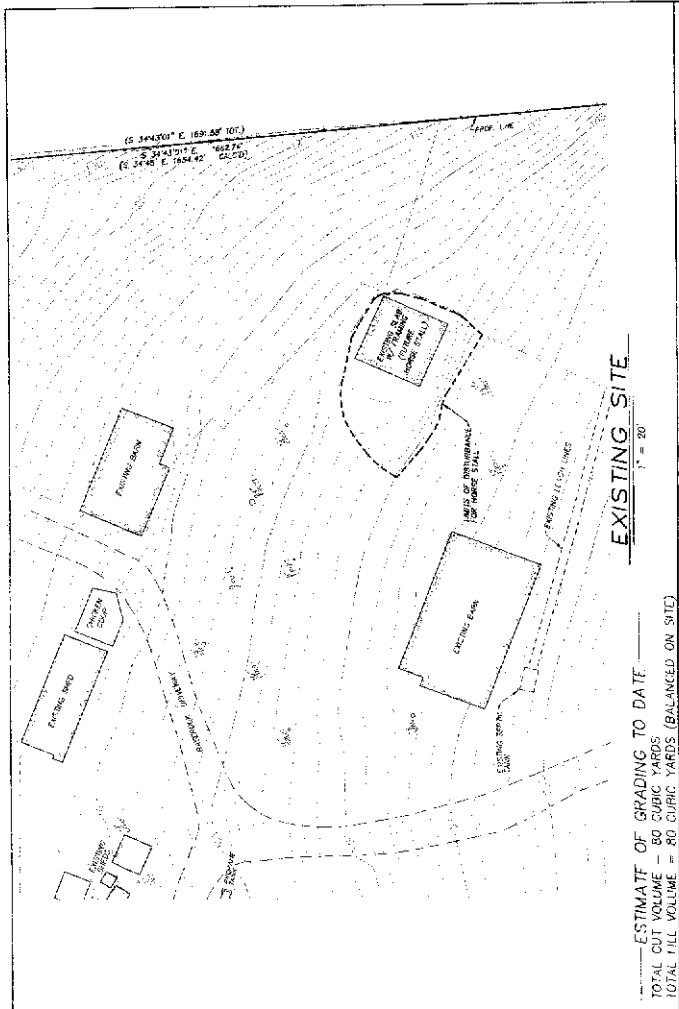
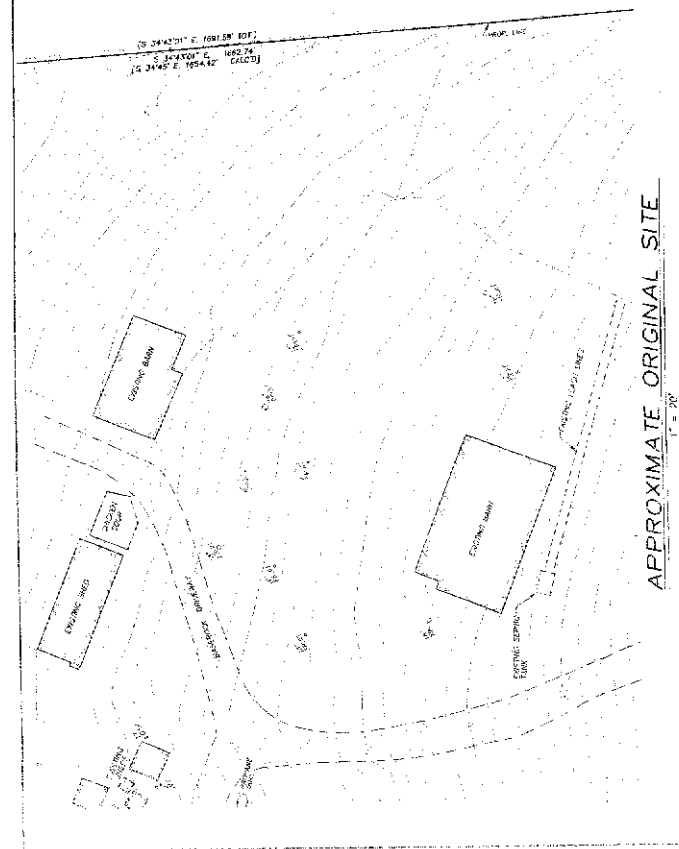
1" = 20'

C6

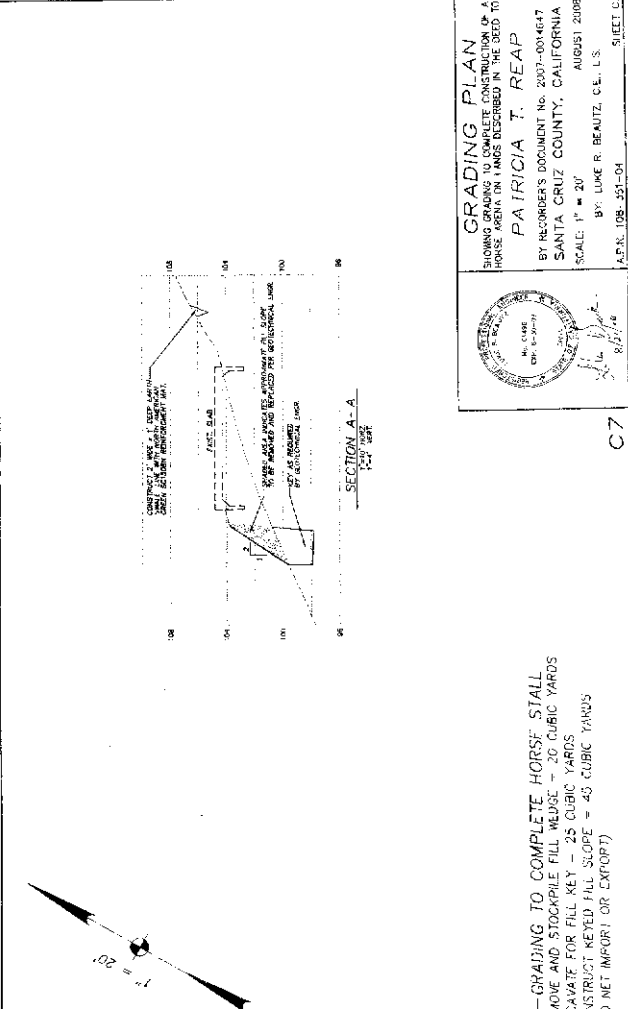
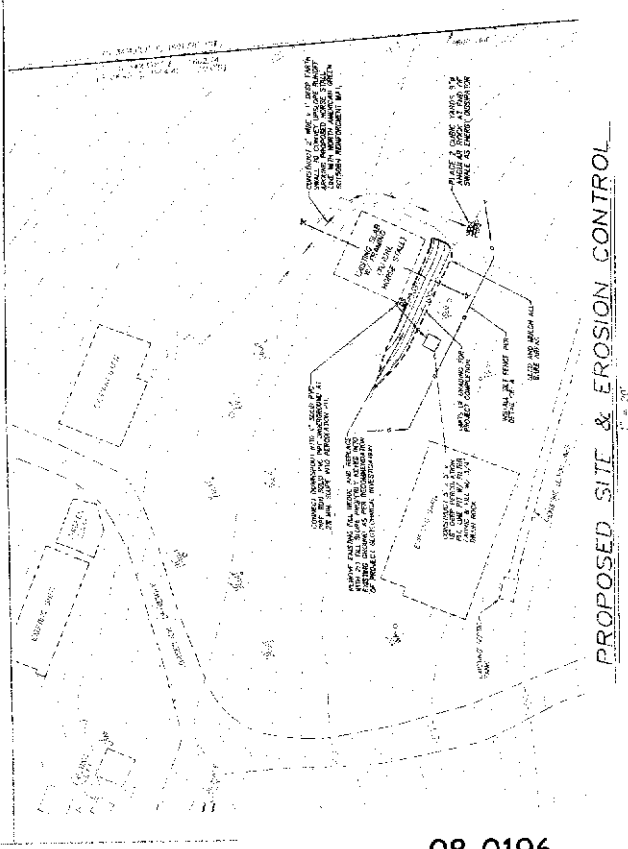


GRADING PLAN
 TO BE SUBMITTED TO THE CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES
 FOR REVIEW AND APPROVAL
 PROJECT NO. 2007-0023551
 PROJECT LOCATION: GALLI ORNIA
 PROJECT OWNER: RICK A. SPEARS
 PROJECT ENGINEER: KELLY M. KLETT
 PROJECT DATE: 10/1/07
 SHEET C6

08-0196

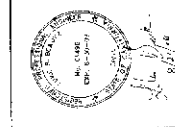


ESTIMATE OF GRADING TO DATE
TOTAL CUT VOLUME = 80 CUBIC YARDS
TOTAL FILL VOLUME = 80 CUBIC YARDS (BALANCED ON SITE)



GRADING TO COMPLETE HORSE STALL
REMOVE AND STOCKPILE FILL WEDGE = 20 CUBIC YARDS
EXCAVATE FOR FILL KEY = 25 CUBIC YARDS
CONSTRUCT KEYED FILL SLOPE = 40 CUBIC YARDS
(NO NET IMPORT OR EXPORT)

GRADING PLAN
PAIRICIA T. REAP
BY REORDER'S DOCUMENT No. 2007-001467
SANTA CRUZ COUNTY, CALIFORNIA
SCALE: 1" = 20' AUGUST 2008
BY: LUKE R. BEAUTZ, C.E., L.S.
A.S.N. 108-551-04



C7

08-0196

**HABITAT ASSESSMENT FOR
SANTA CRUZ LONG-TOED SALAMANDER
AT REAP PROPERTY, 107 NUNES ROAD
APN 108-351-04
SANTA CRUZ COUNTY, CALIFORNIA**

Report Prepared For:

Ms. Patricia Reap
P.O. Box 1043
Freedom, CA 95019

Report Prepared By:

Dana Bland
Dana Bland & Associates
P.O. Box 636
Aptos, CA 95001

February, 2008

INTRODUCTION

The Reap parcel (APN 108-351-04) is located at 107 Nunes Road, Santa Cruz County, California. The parcel is approximately 25 acres and is located on the U. S. G. S. Watsonville West 7.5' quadrangle (see Figure 1). The owner proposes to construct a horse arena and new storage shed on the property.

The purpose of this report was to assess the subject property for potential habitat for Santa Cruz long-toed salamander (*Ambystoma macrodactylum croceum*), a species which is both state and federally listed as endangered.

METHODS

Dana Bland, Wildlife Biologist, conducted a site reconnaissance survey of the property on January 14, 2008. The site was walked on foot and photographed. Habitat types were recorded in a field notebook. The California Natural Diversity Data Base (CDFG 2008) was searched for records of Santa Cruz long-toed salamander (SCLTS) in the general vicinity.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The property at 107 Nunes Road is currently maintained as a rural residential use with several existing buildings including house, sheds, horse barn, and chicken coop. There are two partially constructed facilities which are the primary subject of this report: a partially graded horse arena (approximately 0.5 acre in area), and the slab foundation and framing for a new storage shed (approximately 500 square feet in area).

The habitats observed on the property included oak woodland, non-native grassland, coyote brush scrub, open water, willow riparian, freshwater marsh, ruderal vegetation, landscape plantings, and bare areas.

The topography rises at a moderate slope from Nunes Road to the partially graded horse arena. The horse arena was previously graded in August 2007, and is flat and mostly bare of vegetation; a structural berm on the south edge supports the arena. Excess soil from the grading was stockpiled at the southwestern end of the arena. The horse arena is located in non-native grassland, and bordered on the north by oak woodland. It is approximately 250 feet from the base of the arena berm to the pond on the south (adjacent to Nunes Road).

The partially constructed shed is located in an area of low slope and was graded prior to installation of the slab foundation. It is located just northeast of the large existing barn in non-native grassland habitat. It is approximately 300 feet straight line distance from the pond.

The existing site conditions observed in January 2008 are shown in the photographs below.



SCALE: 1" = .5 MILES

0 .5 1 MILE

Dana Bland & Associates
Consulting Biologists

Location of Proposed Horse Arena at
107 Nunes Road, Watsonville CA, and
Known Locations of Santa Cruz Long-toed
Salamanders within 1 mile of site.

Figure 1
2/08



Photo 1. Partially graded horse arena at 107 Nunes Rd. 1/08



Photo 2. Looking south at pond from partially graded horse arena, 107 Nunes Rd. 1/08

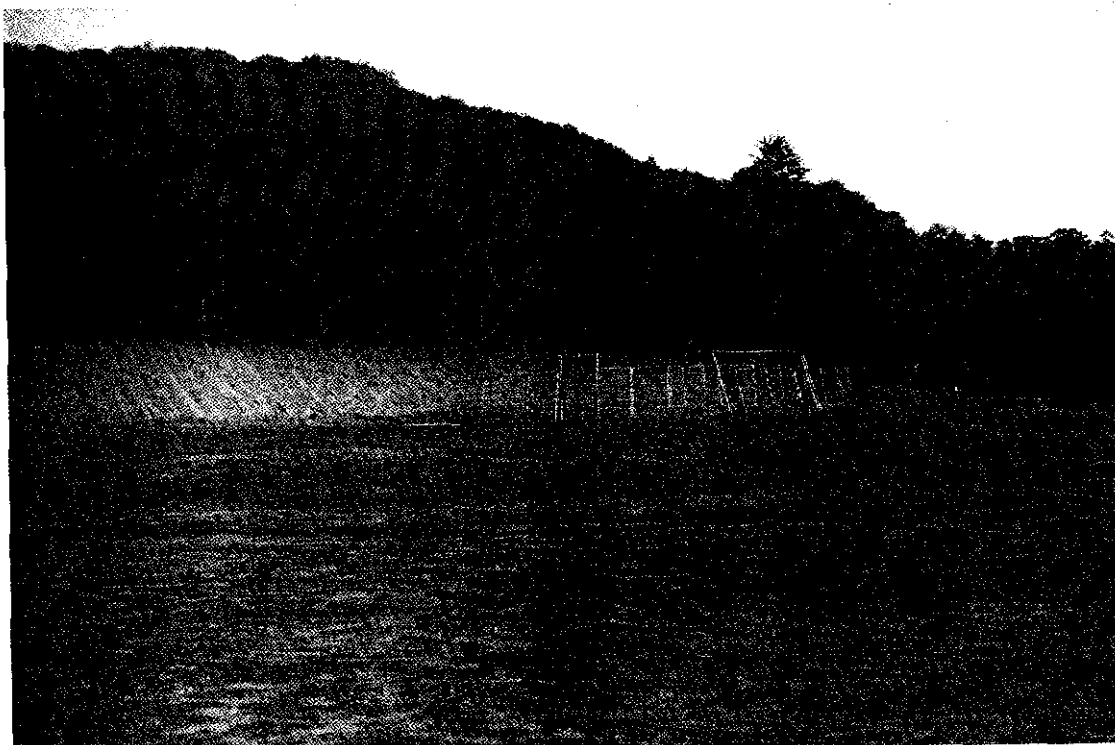


Photo 3. Partially graded horse arena where it abuts oak woodland at 107 Nunes Rd. 1/08



Photo 4. Pond at 107 Nunes Rd. 1/08

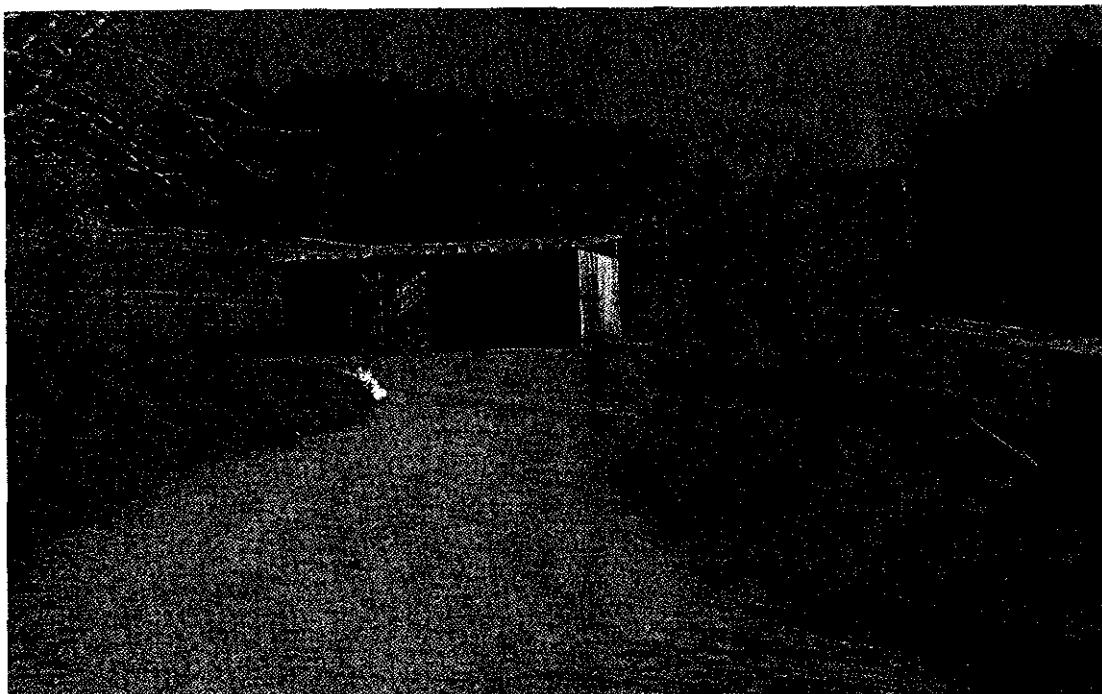


Photo 5. Partially constructed shed at 107 Nunes Road.

ECOLOGY OF THE SPECIES

The Santa Cruz long-toed salamander (*Ambystoma macrodactylum croceum*) is listed by both California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) and the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) as endangered. This species spends most of the year in upland refugia. They use small mammal burrows or hide under dense leaf litter and rotting logs. This salamander prefers riparian, oak woodland and coastal scrub for upland habitat. During rainy winter nights, adult salamanders travel from their upland refugia to temporary or semi-permanent ponds to breed (USFWS 1999). Santa Cruz long-toed salamanders have been documented to travel up to 0.6 mile from upland habitat to breeding ponds (Ruth 1989), and some may travel up to 1.0 mile (USFWS 2004). Adult salamanders usually begin their migration to their breeding pond in November, and most adults have returned to their upland refugia by March. Females lay eggs singly on stalks of submerged vegetation, which hatch within 30 days. Larvae take up to 6 months to transform into juveniles, depending upon pond conditions. The juveniles then typically remain in the moist pond environs until the first fall rains, when they begin their dispersal to upland areas.

There are 22 known breeding ponds of this salamander in southern Santa Cruz County and northern Monterey County (USFWS 2004). Two of the 22 known breeding ponds no longer provide suitable breeding conditions for the salamander (Rancho Road and Bennett Slough/Struve Pond) (USFWS 2004).

Two known breeding sites for Santa Cruz long-toed salamanders occur within 1.0 mile of the Reap property, the Tucker pond (approximately 0.6 mile northwest) and Cerruti (=Milsap) pond (approximately 0.75 mile east) (see Figure 1). The CNDDDB also lists three observations of individual salamanders within 1.0 mile of the Reap property, including one salamander found dead on Nunes Road approximately 0.25 mile south of the Reap property (Wes Savage, pers. comm.), one near a stock pond just off White Road, and one in a swimming pool off of Calabasas Road near the intersection with White Road (see Figure 1) (CDFG 2008).

DISCUSSION

The Reap property is within the known dispersal range for Santa Cruz long-toed salamanders that inhabit the Tucker and Cerruti breeding ponds. The property has one stock pond and one smaller pond in an ephemeral drainage which may provide breeding habitat for this salamander species. Abundant bullfrog tadpoles were observed in the stock pond during the January 2008 site visit, and the property owner stated that the pond also contains non-native fish and crawfish. The property includes dense oak woodland and patches of willow riparian that provide suitable upland habitat for the Santa Cruz long-toed salamander.

As can be seen in the photos above, the partially graded horse arena and new storage shed are now either bare of vegetation or have sparse grassland vegetation. Based on current field observations, as well as previous years aerial photos posted on the Santa Cruz County GIS web site and Google Earth, both the horse arena and new shed were graded in areas of non-native grassland. These areas currently do not have sufficient cover to provide upland habitat for the SCLTS.

No evidence was observed during the January 2008 site visit that indicates the areas graded in August 2007 removed any oak trees or oak woodland habitats (i.e., previous year's aerial photos, lack of tree stumps, lack of tree debris in the soil stockpile). Both areas of grading occurred at least 250 feet from the pond; there was no direct impact to the pond, and no evidence of indirect impacts to the pond. During the January 2008 site visit, the horse arena area had been winterized with coir rolls, erosion blankets, and hay to prevent sediment runoff to the pond located downhill. Only minor grading or leveling of the horse arena will be necessary to complete the project, and will not include any removal of oak or willow habitats on the property (Patricia Reap, pers. comm.).

The use of the horse arena is not expected to present any barriers to salamander movement between the potential upland habitat in the oak woodland and the pond. The arena will be enclosed with typical "corral" type fencing, either wood or metal posts, with no ground level barriers to inhibit salamander movement. The arena will only be used during the daytime, and during fair weather. Because Santa Cruz long-toed salamanders travel between their upland and breeding pond habitats during rainy winter nights, this use of the horse arena is not expected to inhibit such movements.

The location of the new shed is not expected to present any significant barriers to salamander movement. It is located just east of the existing large horse barn. The relatively small size of the new shed is not expected to cause significant barriers to salamander movement across the general vicinity. No evidence was observed during the January 2008 site visit that the new shed caused any direct or indirect impacts to the pond on the property.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As described above, there is no evidence that the new facilities will significantly impact the Santa Cruz long-toed salamander. However, to help ensure the long-term viability of potential upland and breeding habitat for the species on the property, the following measures are recommended to avoid any harm to the species and to enhance native habitat on the site.

- (1) No oak woodland, riparian woodland, or scrub habitat should be removed in the future prior to environmental review.
- (2) The removal of non-native broom on the site (e.g., near the pond) is recommended to prevent the spread of this invasive, non-native species. Some patches of broom occur along the pond levee where it may be undesirable to completely dig up or pull up the plant due to issues with levee stability. For those areas, the broom may be sprayed with a 2% mixture of Rodeo and a non-ionic surfactant registered for aquatic applications. It is recommended that the applicant hire a person with a commercial herbicide license to treat the broom.

LITERATURE CITED

California Department of Fish and Game. 2008. California Natural Diversity Data Base. Rarefind3 Program, Natural Heritage Division, Sacramento, CA.

Ruth, S. B. 1989. Seascape uplands Santa Cruz long-toed salamander study. Unpublished report, Sept. 1989.

U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 1999. Santa Cruz long-toed salamander (*Ambystoma macrodactylum croceum*) draft revised recovery plan. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Portland, Oregon. Vi. + 82 pp.

U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 2004. Draft Revised Recovery Plan for the Santa Cruz long-toed salamander (*Ambystoma macrodactylum croceum*). U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Portland, Oregon. Vii. + 108 pp.

Please call me if you have questions about this letter. A copy will also be sent to the project planner so that the conditions can be properly incorporated into the building permit.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matt Johnston", with a large, sweeping flourish extending from the end of the signature.

Matthew Johnston
Resource Planner

CC: Robert Loveland, Resource Planner
Patricia Reap

FOR: Claudia Slater
Principal Planner
Environmental Planning