



# COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

## PLANNING DEPARTMENT

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KATHLEEN MOLLOY PREVISICH, PLANNING DIRECTOR

March 4, 2014

Zoning Administrator  
County of Santa Cruz  
701 Ocean Street  
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

**Agenda Date: April 4, 2014**

Agenda Item #: 2

Time: After 9:00 a.m.

**Subject: Six month review of Permit #131132, which allows for a parachute landing site at 515 Calabasas Road in Watsonville.**

The proposal to allow for the operation of a parachute landing area at 515 Calabasas Road in Watsonville was approved by the Zoning Administrator on August 2, 2013. The staff report and the recorded conditions of approval of the permit are attached as Exhibits A and B, respectively.

Condition of approval II.H requires that the project be reviewed by the Zoning Administrator at a public hearing after six months of operation to review condition compliance and the status of the process to land skydivers at the Watsonville airport. The skydiving business was closed during the months of December and January, therefore, the six month follow-up is taking place in April.

### Condition Compliance

The conditions of approval of the permit which impact the operation of the skydiving business are provided below in **bold**, with staff responses in *italics*.

- I.C. Submit a sign plan to the County Planning Department for review and approval. The sign plan shall provide details for a new directional sign that shall be installed on the subject parcel at the frontage of the parcel, clearly visible from Calabasas Road. The sign shall comply with the requirements of County Code Section 13.10.584.**

*A 9" x 12" directional sign was installed at the site frontage clearly visible from Calabasas Road. In order to identify the site to guests of the skydivers and not to advertise the location to members of the public, the sign only includes the business logo and an arrow. The sign complies with the requirements of County Code section 13.10.584 in that the sign is less than 12" x 42", it contains the business logo and one arrow only, and it is not illuminated. (Exhibit C)*

- I.D. The following language shall be added to the existing signage in the Skydive Surf City main office and shall be added to the waiver or contract that is signed by the customer prior to the skydive: "No noise above a normal speaking level is permitted when under the parachute." The applicant shall submit photos of the revised signs and a copy of the revised waiver/contract to the Planning Department for review**

**and approval prior to exercising any rights granted by this permit.**

*The waiver/contract that is signed by guests prior to skydiving, has been revised to include the above required language. The language was also added to signs in the office, on the landing site (spectator area), in the airplane, and in the shuttle van. Photos are attached as Exhibit D.*

**I.E. Off-street parking shall be provided for a minimum of two vehicles in addition to the parking spaces required for the residential use. A loading area shall remain available on site to accommodate the shuttle/van.**

*Two designated guest parking spaces are located adjacent to the spectator area and a loading area remains available. Photos are attached as Exhibit E.*

**I.F. Within 30 days of the effective date of this permit, the property owner/applicant shall submit to the Planning Department a revised landing path plan that shows the descent of skydivers occurring further to the south, away from the west adjacent Residential Agricultural (RA) zoned parcels. This new landing path shall be implemented upon Planning Department approval.**

*A revised landing path plan was submitted to the Planning Department on November 12, 2013, however, the applicant indicated that the new approach paths were implemented immediately after the public hearing. The skydivers now travel to the landing site from further south and do not overfly parcels 049-451-08 (Underwood) or 049-091-20 (Marinovich). The applicant has also provided an alternative landing path that is used approximately 10% of the time when the wind comes from inland rather than the coast. This alternative approach also does not overfly the above referenced parcels. (Exhibit F)*

*As evidence of the revised landing path, a GPS device was used to track the actual path of the skydivers in their descent. The waypoints, or coordinates, were mapped with Google Earth and provide an image/path of an actual landing (Exhibit G). Although the applicant has indicated that every landing will not follow this exact path, the instructors are aware of the location constraints and are required to make every possible effort to not overfly the residential properties to the west.*

**II.I. An update letter shall be mailed to all parcels that are located within 300 feet of the subject parcels boundaries every 2 months for one year starting on the effective date of this permit. The mailing list shall also include the county project planner and any member of the public who requests a copy of the update. The letter shall provide a status update of the approval to land skydivers at the airport. This notice is informational only and does not impact the issuance of this permit.**

*Three update letters have been mailed to parcels that are located within 300 feet of the parcel boundaries. See Exhibit H.*

### **Status of Watsonville Airport Landing Area**

An Airport Layout Plan (ALP) is used to depict existing and planned development for an airport and must be kept up-to-date at all times. It appears that an updated ALP for the Watsonville

Airport, which shows the location of the parachute landing area, has been submitted to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and is currently under review. An email from the FAA was submitted by the applicant (Exhibit I), which indicates that the parachute landing zone has been air spaced and is up for the Airport District Office's (ADO) approval and that approval of the ALP is progressing as anticipated.

As discussed at the August 2013 public hearing, the Watsonville Airport is designated as a "critical habitat" area by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service due to the potential for disturbance to tarplant, red-legged frog, and salamander habitat. The FAA is required to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) for all proposed airport development projects that require a federal action. Therefore, the parachute landing area will need environmental evaluation prior to use. Following approval of the ALP, the applicant will be required to work with the City of Watsonville to prepare and submit to the FAA an Extraordinary Circumstances Information Submittal for the establishment of the parachute landing zone. The FAA will determine if the project qualifies for a Categorical Exclusion under NEPA. (Exhibits I & J)

### **Recommendation**

It appears that the applicant is making progress in obtaining all necessary approvals to land skydivers at the Watsonville airport and that any delays to approve such use are associated with the FAA's review and approval process.

The Planning Department has not received any complaints regarding the continuation of the operation at 515 Calabasas Road since the August 2013 public hearing and the applicant has provided evidence of compliance with all operation conditions of approval of permit #131132.

Condition of approval II.J requires the applicant to submit letters to the owners of all parcels within 300 feet of the subject parcel's property lines and to the Planning Department regarding the status of the approval to land skydivers at the airport. The continued requirement for update letters will allow for Planning Department staff to ensure that the applicant continues to pursue the required approvals that would allow for airport landings.

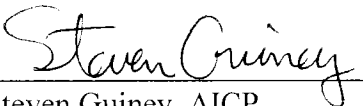
Therefore, staff recommends that all conditions of approval of permit #131132 remain in effect, and approval of the following additional requirement:

- If it is determined by Planning Department staff that the progress to transfer parachute landings off of the subject property has significantly stalled or been delayed either purposefully or as a result of approval processes, Planning Department staff may refer the item back to the Zoning Administrator for review at a scheduled public hearing to re-evaluate the conditions of approval of the permit or to consider permit revocation.

Sincerely,



Samantha Haschert  
Project Planner  
Development Review

Reviewed By:   
Steven Guiney, AICP  
Principal Planner  
Development Review

Exhibits:

- A. August 2, 2013 Staff Report to the Zoning Administrator
- B. Commercial Development Permit #131132 and recorded conditions of approval
- C. Directional signage photos and description, prepared by applicant.
- D. Waiver/contract and signage with noise limitations, prepared by applicant.
- E. On-site parking area photos, prepared by applicant.
- F. Revised parachute landing path, prepared by applicant.
- G. GPS Flight Path Tracking Records, prepared by applicant.
- H. Update letters to neighbors dated 11/3/13, 1/21/14, and 3/19/14.
- I. Comments and Correspondence, received from applicant.
- J. How to Prepare your Categorical Exclusion (CATEX) Information and Prepare a Brief Environmental Assessment, flowchart (slide 6) and Steps in the CATEX Process (slide 11), prepared by the FAA, dated 9/21/06.
- K. Comments and Correspondence, received from the public.





## Staff Report to the Zoning Administrator

Application Number: **131132**

**Applicant:** Volker Haag  
**Owner:** Watsonville Sod, LLC  
**APN:** 04909124

**Agenda Date:** August 2, 2013  
**Agenda Item #:**  
**Time:** After 9:00 a.m.

**Project Description:** Proposal to allow for the operation of a parachute landing area on an Agricultural (A) zoned parcel. Requires a Level 5 Use Permit.

**Location:** Property located on the west side of Calabasas Road about 1.5 miles from Buena Vista Road (515 Calabasas Road).

**Supervisory District:** 2<sup>nd</sup> District (District Supervisor: Friend)

**Permits Required:** Level 5 Use Permit  
**Technical Reviews:** None

### Staff Recommendation:

- Certification that the proposal is exempt from further Environmental Review under the California Environmental Quality Act.
- Approval of Application 131132, based on the attached findings and conditions.

### Exhibits

- |    |  |  |
|----|--|--|
| A. | Categorical Exemption (CEQA determination)         | retrieved from Department of Chemistry, Purdue University (reference on exhibit) |
| B. | Findings   |  |
| C. | Conditions   | H. 49 USC § 40103 – Sovereignty and use of airspace                              |
| D. | Program Statements and Maps                        | I. Correspondence from applicant and Attorney Richard Manning                    |
| E. | Assessor's, Location, Zoning and General Plan Maps | J. Public comments & correspondence with map summary prepared by staff           |
| F. | Property Deed to Watsonville Sod, LLC              |  |
| G. | Noise Sources and Their Effects,                   |  |

### Parcel Information

Parcel Size: 9.62 acres  
Existing Land Use - Parcel: Agriculture; developed with a single family dwelling  
Existing Land Use - Surrounding: Agriculture and Residential  
Project Access: Via Calabasas Road  
Planning Area: Aptos Hills  
Land Use Designation: R-R (Rural Residential)  
Zone District: A (Agriculture)  
Coastal Zone: ☐ Inside ☒ Outside  
Appealable to Calif. Coastal Comm. ☐ Yes ☒ No

### Environmental Information

Geologic Hazards: Not mapped  
Soils: N/A  
Fire Hazard: Not a mapped constraint  
Slopes: Primarily flat parcel  
Env. Sen. Habitat: Not mapped habitat; it is noted and expected that raptors such as white tailed kites and red tailed hawks forage in the surrounding vicinity; however, there are no tall trees on the subject property that would be impacted by the landing of parachutes; therefore, there are no significant impacts to nesting anticipated as a result of this permit.  
Grading: No grading proposed  
Tree Removal: No trees proposed to be removed  
Scenic: Not a mapped resource  
Drainage: Existing drainage adequate; no new structures or impervious surfaces proposed  
Archeology: Not mapped

### Services Information

Urban/Rural Services Line: ☐ Inside ☒ Outside  
Water Supply: Private well  
Sewage Disposal: Septic  
Fire District: Pajaro Valley Fire District  
Drainage District: Zone 7

### History

Between 1979 and 1983, the property owner obtained permits to construct greenhouses, a nursery, and to install a permanent mobile home on the property.

The property came under ownership of Watsonville Sod, LLC in 2012.

In February 2013, the Planning Department received a complaint that the parcel was being used

as a skydiving landing area and the County opened a subsequent code violation case (CV23291). The applicant filed a protest of the code violation and also submitted the current application to recognize the use. Given the permit application submittal, the red tag was subsequently removed from the property.

Photos from 2011, which were submitted by the applicant, show the extent of neglect on the property prior to the current ownership, including dilapidated greenhouse structures and sheds, piles of construction materials, and construction vehicles. The structures, vehicles, and other refuse were removed by the current property owner and the majority of the parcel was seeded for sod as shown in the below photo from 2013.



## Project Setting

The parcel is located on the south west side of Calabasas Road in Watsonville and is developed with a single family dwelling. The skydiving landing site is located towards the center of the parcel as shown on the photo above. The parcel is flat in the location of the landing site and slopes gently downwards to the south and west property lines. There is a steeper drop towards the southwest property line. There are residences on the adjacent parcels to the east, west and south, with the closest residence being approximately 250 feet east of the landing site.

Adjacent parcels to the north, east, and south are also zoned Agriculture (A) and the adjacent parcels to the west are zoned Residential Agriculture (RA).

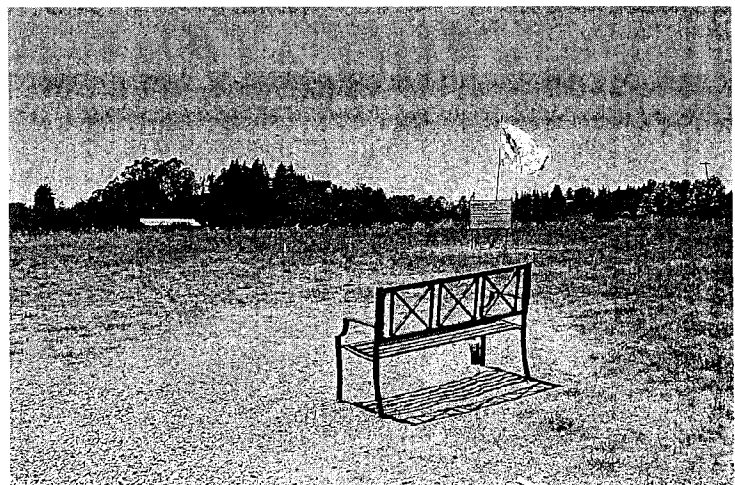
## Proposed Operations

The proposal is to allow a skydiving operation (Skydive Surf City) that is located at the Watsonville Airport, to land skydivers on the Agriculturally (A) zoned parcel. The parcel, known as APN 049-091-24 or 515 Calabasas Road, is located about one and a half miles from the

airport, as the crow flies. The skydiving business is owned by the property owner of the subject parcel and a business license for the operation was issued by the City of Watsonville.

A typical skydive lasts an average of 5 minutes and consists of approximately 1 minute of freefall and about 3.5 to 5 minutes of parachuting. The parachuting portion of the jump takes place between 5000 and 1000 feet. The landing of the parachute from 1000 feet in elevation to the ground is approximately 30 seconds long. Two skydives usually take place at the same time, or in the same jump run, and the owner indicates that there are two jump runs per hour max. Skydives currently occur between the hours of 9:30 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. The owner indicates that between 4 and 6 skydives *jumpruns* take place in a typical day and that 15 is the maximum number of jump runs that has ever occurred in one day. *(Amended at ZA mtg 8/2/13)*

There are few skydives that consist of a single skydiver. The majority of the jumps are done in tandem with a Skydive Surf City instructor. During a tandem jump, the instructor (attached to the back of the customer) may take photos or video of the customer with a digital camera attached to their hand. The videos and photos focus exclusively on the customer's face. The cameras are not used to film any other person or property and could not likely be used to film other persons or properties given the direction that the camera is facing and the way that it's attached to the instructor's hand (see Exhibit I for additional photos).



Left: Cameras attached to instructor's hand; Above: Landing site

A Skydive Surf City shuttle van arrives at the landing site prior to the parachute landing and is used to shuttle all skydivers back to the airport immediately following the landing. Although family members and friends of the skydivers are permitted on the site to view the landings, existing signage at the landing site and verbal instructions from the skydiving business indicate that spectators should not yell up to the parachutes and that they should be mindful of neighbors. No additional activity occurs at the landing site with the exception of normal conversation that is expected in association with a residential use.

## **Project Analysis**

### *Zoning & General Plan Consistency*

The subject property is located within the Agriculture (A) zone district, a designation which allows for recreational uses without special findings that are required in the Commercial Agriculture (CA) or Agricultural Preserve (AP) zone districts. The A zone district implements and is consistent with the General Plan designation of Rural Residential (R-R), as per County Code Section 13.10.170, in that R-R designated parcels are intended to provide areas for low density development where the rural character of the area can be maintained.

The proposed use of the ~~parcels~~ *parcel* as a skydiving landing site is consistent with the purposes of the A zone district in that the primary use of the property is a sod growing operation and the landing site will be ancillary to the primary agricultural use of the parcel. (*Amended at ZA mtg 8/2/13*) The sod business is a limited commercial agricultural activity that is not impacted by the landing of skydivers. There are no proposed or existing structures, pavement, or land alterations associated with the landing site. Parachutes, small aircraft, hot air balloons, hang gliders, and other airborne recreational vehicles are a common feature or sighting in a rural landscape and, because the only actions that occur on the ground are consistent with that of a normal residential use, the operation does not impact the rural character of the county. Therefore, the operation is consistent with the purpose of the R-R General Plan designation and the A zone district and is an allowed use in the A zone district with Zoning Administrator approval.

Skydiving landing areas do not have specific regulations in the county code; however, the use requires approval of a discretionary permit and is therefore subject to all applicable code requirements. This analysis focuses on the use of the property as a skydiving landing site and not on the use of the airspace for skydiving as the use of airspace is regulated by the Federal Aviation Administration.

### *Parking and Traffic*

Skydive Surf City's main office is located at the Watsonville Airport. The main office is where customers check in, receive training and instruction, complete administrative tasks, and depart in the plane. The proposed landing site at 515 Calabasas Road is located just less than 3 miles from the Watsonville Airport; therefore, a shuttle van is utilized to bring customers and instructors from the landing site back to the main office after the jump. Customers do not drive and park their own vehicles at the site. The only public traffic to and from the site is associated with occasional family or friends viewing the landing. The driveway terminates at the subject parcel and there is adequate room in the driveway to park two or three vehicles at the site, including the shuttle van; therefore, no additional parking is required.

It is not anticipated that the number of vehicle trips associated with occasional spectators at the site would generate traffic that would cause congestion on surrounding streets. However, the parcel is a flag lot that is accessed by an approximately 330 foot long driveway that is immediately adjacent to the neighboring driveway and the site is not clearly marked at Calabasas Road. Directional signage at the intersection of the private driveway and Calabasas Road would

help to reduce potential trespassing onto neighboring properties and would reduce the instance of lost drivers in the area. Therefore, a condition of approval is included which requires that the applicant submit a sign plan for a directional sign to be installed at the intersection of the private driveway and Calabasas Road that meets the requirements of County Code Section 13.10.584.

### *Noise*

Throughout the processing of this application, the Department has received comments from some of the surrounding neighbors which indicate that the operation produces noise that is not consistent with the rural character of the area. Specifically, that the sound of the parachute opening, the sound of the parachute in flight, and the general cheering and yelling of airborne skydivers are loud and disturbing to adjacent residential uses.

On June 28<sup>th</sup>, a staff site visit was conducted and parachute landings were viewed from the following addresses: 555 Calabasas Road, 547 Calabasas Road, 400 Oak Hollow Road, and the subject property at 515 Calabasas Road. During the site visit, it was determined that the sound of the parachute opening was apparent from the ground as well as the sound of conversation between the instructor and the customer while under the parachute. Yelling and cheering did not occur during the jumps that were witnessed by staff. Both the mid-air conversational noise and the sound of the parachute opening were discernible from the yard of a neighboring property but they were not louder than the sound of a nearby ground level outdoor conversation. It was also observed that the freefall portion of the jump was not visible from the ground and that plane noise was not discernible from other ambient noise including other aircraft and power tools in the vicinity.

General Plan Policy 6.9.1 provides Land Use Compatibility Guidelines for new residential and noise sensitive land developments. The policy indicates that an exterior noise exposure of 60dB  $L_{dn}$ (day/night average sound level) in residential areas is normally acceptable. A noise source of 60 dB is comparable to that of conversation in a restaurant or office, background music, or an air conditioning unit at 100 ft distant (Exhibit G). The noise produced by both the opening of the parachute and by conversation in the air, while perceptible on the ground, is likely well under 60dB and would therefore meet the General Plan threshold for a normally acceptable exterior noise environmental for a residential area. Yells and cheers, although not witnessed during the site visit, would likely register similar to that of a bird call in terms of volume given the distance of the source; however, some of the neighbors expressed opposition to the repetitive nature of the noise. In response to the neighbors' comments, the property owner implemented a "no yelling" policy that the Skydive Surf City instructors are required to enforce to ensure that customers do not scream or cheer during the parachute portion of the jump. Instructors are required to advise customers of the policy during the mandatory safety briefings, in the aircraft, and while airborne. Additionally, visitors viewing the jumps from the landing site are also informed of the policy by Skydive Surf City staff and by signage posted at the landing site. Signage is also located at the business office and in the aircraft, and a condition of approval would require that the policy is included in the contract signed by the customer prior to the jump. An additional condition of approval would require that additional language is included on the signage in the office and on the contract that prohibits yelling or cheering while under the parachute and upon landing.

Additionally, some neighbors have indicated that jumps take place very late in the evening; therefore, a condition of approval is recommended to that would limit skydives to between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. between May and September and between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. between October and April. The business is closed on Wednesdays; therefore, no landings shall occur on Wednesdays.

### *Watsonville Airport Landings*

The applicant is currently in the process of obtaining permission to land skydivers at the Watsonville Airport. Landing skydivers at the airport from which the plane departs appears to be typical of other skydiving operations in most jurisdictions. According to the Watsonville Airport Manager, Skydive Surf City must obtain permission to land skydivers at the airport; however, the Watsonville Airport is mapped as critical habitat area for the Santa Cruz tarplant, which is a plant species that is listed as threatened by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and permission to land at the airport is contingent upon the applicant first obtaining a biological opinion from both the USFWS and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). The applicant must notify three different divisions of the FAA prior to consideration by the USFWS. According to the Watsonville Airport Manager, the FAA regulations allow for skydivers to land at airports, however, there are preliminary reviews required to ensure that safety regulations are being met and that the landing site is mapped.

The Watsonville Airport Manager indicates that the applicant has begun the process of obtaining the necessary approvals/reviews from the FAA and estimates that permission to land skydivers at the airport could be obtained by the spring of 2014.

### **Environmental Review**

The proposed use of the property as a skydiving land area qualifies for an Exemption to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under Sections 15301 (Existing Facilities) and 15304 (Minor Alterations to Land).

Class 1 (Section 15301) exemption states: "Class 1 consists of the operation, repair, maintenance, permitting, leasing, licensing, or minor alteration of existing public or private structures, facilities, mechanical equipment, or topographical features, involving negligible or no expansion of use beyond that existing at the time of the lead agency's determination."

Class 4 (Section 15304) exemption states: "Class 4 consists of minor public or private alterations in the condition of land, water, and/or vegetation which do not involve removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees except for forestry or agricultural purposes."

The project does not involve the construction of new structures, the alteration of existing structures, or the removal of vegetation. No alterations to the land will occur as a result of the project in that parachute landing does not create excessive compaction of earth and is comparable to normal outdoor recreational activities that may occur on the site in association with the residential use. Additionally, parachute landing does not minimize the agricultural use of the parcel in that only about 5000 square feet of the 9 acre parcel is utilized for the operation.

## **Conclusion**

As proposed and conditioned, the project is consistent with all applicable codes and policies of the Zoning Ordinance and General Plan/LCP. Please see Exhibit "B" ("Findings") for a complete listing of findings and evidence related to the above discussion.

## **Staff Recommendation**

- Certification that the proposal is exempt from further Environmental Review under the California Environmental Quality Act.
- **APPROVAL** of Application Number **131132**, based on the attached findings and conditions.

**Supplementary reports and information referred to in this report are on file and available for viewing at the Santa Cruz County Planning Department, and are hereby made a part of the administrative record for the proposed project.**

**The County Code and General Plan, as well as hearing agendas and additional information are available online at: [www.co.santa-cruz.ca.us](http://www.co.santa-cruz.ca.us)**

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## Development Permit Findings

1. That the proposed location of the project and the conditions under which it would be operated or maintained will not be detrimental to the health, safety, or welfare of persons residing or working in the neighborhood or the general public, and will not result in inefficient or wasteful use of energy, and will not be materially injurious to properties or improvements in the vicinity.

This finding can be made, in that the landing site is located in an area which allows for recreational uses, *as per County Code Section 13.10.312, the Agricultural Uses Chart* and is not encumbered by physical constraints that would impede the landing of parachutes on the property. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is the responsible agency for controlling traffic within the airspace including sport parachuting and the FAA requires that skydiving operations comply with the safety guidelines and recommendations provided by the United States Parachuting Association. Therefore, the airborne portion of the operation is within the jurisdiction of the FAA and guidelines and standards are in place to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of the general public and of persons residing in the area. The landing site is within the County's jurisdiction, however, there are no proposed structures associated with the proposed use and there are no existing tall structures, trees, or other obstructions that would impede the landing of parachutes on the property. *(Amended at ZA mtg 8/2/13)*

2. That the proposed location of the project and the conditions under which it would be operated or maintained will be consistent with all pertinent County ordinances and the purpose of the zone district in which the site is located.

The proposed use of the site as a recreational skydiving landing area is an allowed use in the Agriculture (A) zone district as per County Code Section 13.10.312 (Agricultural Use Chart) *which allows for "Recreational Activities: playfields not involving permanent structures or paving."* The proposed use is considered to be appropriate for this category of use in that the skydiving landing area does not include the construction of new permanent structures or paving and is a use that can co-exist with the intended agricultural use of the property, which is a sod growing business. Although the use charts for other zone districts may have exclusive commercial use categories, the lack thereof from the agricultural use chart does not imply that it is not permitted. The Recreational Activities category does not distinguish between commercial and non-commercial recreational uses; therefore, it is interpreted that both uses are permitted subject to a Level 5 Use Approval. ~~and the~~

The use is consistent with the purposes of the A zone district (SCCO 13.10.311) in that the parachute landings will not minimize or impact the primary use of the property, which is an agricultural sod growing operation with one single family dwelling, and the parachute landing area consists of only about 5,000 square feet of the 9 acre parcel. Grass, in conjunction with the sod business, is able to grow within in the landing area and is not impacted by landing skydivers. Parachutes are a common feature or sighting in a rural viewshed and the landing of skydivers, who are shuttled immediately back to the airport, does not impact the rural character of the community.

*Although the adjacent to the west of the subject parcel are zoned as Residential Agriculture*

*(RA), the subject property is zoned Agriculture (A) and is therefore not subject to the requirements and regulations in County Code Chapter 13.10.323.*

*For the above stated reasons, this finding can be made. (Amended at ZA mtg 8/2/13)*

3. That the proposed use is consistent with all elements of the County General Plan and with any specific plan which has been adopted for the area.

The proposed parachute landings are consistent with the use and density requirements specified for the Rural Residential (R-R) land use designation in the County General Plan in that there is only one residence currently on the site and no new residences are proposed that would increase the density of the site. The landing of parachutes at the site will maintain the rural character of the area because the proposed use is not an intensive development. No additional construction, paving, grading, or other land alterations or structures are required to support the proposed use.

The parcel is not designated as an agricultural resource in the County General Plan and is therefore subject to County Code Section 16.50.085; however, the proposal does not include a division of land or the creation of new parcels, therefore, this code section is not applicable.

The proposed use complies with General Plan Policies 6.9.1 (Noise Element) in that no noise associated with the landing site exceeds the maximum of 60 dB for residential areas. The noise associated with the landing site includes talking within a normal noise range and occasional cheering or shouting which are noises that are commonly associated with residential uses.

There are no structures associated with the proposed skydiving landing area; therefore the use is not subject to General Plan policies regarding the protection of scenic resources. Although the parachutes in flight may be visible from scenic roads as defined in General Plan policy 5.10.10, the policy does not regulate aircrafts or activities therefrom, in that airspace is regulated by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

For these reasons, this finding can be made.

4. That the proposed use will not overload utilities and will not generate more than the acceptable level of traffic on the streets in the vicinity.

This finding can be made in that there are no structures or land alterations associated with the proposed use that would overload utilities and the site is not open to the public to view landings. Occasional vehicles on site in conjunction with the landing site are either the shuttle van or are private vehicles associated with permitted spectators, such as family members or friends of a customer and these vehicles are not expected to generate more than the acceptable level of traffic on streets in the vicinity.

5. That the proposed project will complement and harmonize with the existing and proposed land uses in the vicinity and will be compatible with the physical design aspects, land use intensities, and dwelling unit densities of the neighborhood.

This finding can be made in that the use of the property as a skydiving landing site does not

Application #: 131132  
APN: 04909124  
Owner: Volker Haag

create noise in excess of the standards set forth in the General Plan. The use will be conditioned to take place only between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. during the months of May through September and between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. during the months of October through April. There are no structures associated with the use that could be incompatible with the physical design aspects of the agricultural and rural residential neighborhood, and there are no new dwelling units proposed that would increase the density of the parcel. The land use intensity of the site will not be increased as a result of the landing site in that the property is currently developed with a single family dwelling and the activity that takes place at the landing site following the parachute landing is consistent with that of a normal residential parcel.

6. The proposed development project is consistent with the Design Standards and Guidelines (sections 13.11.070 through 13.11.076), and any other applicable requirements of this chapter.

This finding is not applicable in that there are no structures associated with the proposed use that would be subject to the Design Standards and Guidelines in County Code Chapter 13.11.



# COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

## Planning Department

### LEVEL 5 USE PERMIT

Owner: Volker Haag

Permit Number: 131132

Address: 515 Calabasas Road  
Wastonville, CA 95076

Parcel Number(s): 049-091-24

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND LOCATION

Proposal to allow for the operation of a parachute landing area on an Agriculturally zoned parcel. Requires a Level 5 Use Permit.

Property located on the west side of Calabasas Road about 1.5 miles from Buena Vista Road (515 Calabasas Road).

### SUBJECT TO ATTACHED CONDITIONS

Approval Date: 8/2/2013

Effective Date: 8/16/2013

Exp. Date (if not exercised): see conditions

Coastal Appeal Exp.Date: n/a

Denial Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Denial Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ This project requires a Coastal Zone Permit, which is not appealable to the California Coastal Commission. It may be appealed to the Board of Supervisors. The appeal must be filed within 14 calendar days of action by the decision body.

\_\_\_\_\_ This project requires a Coastal Zone Permit, the approval of which is appealable to the California Coastal Commission. (Grounds for appeal are listed in the County Code Section 13.20.110.) The appeal must be filed with the Coastal Commission within 10 business days of receipt by the Coastal Commission of notice of local action. Approval or denial of the Coastal Zone Permit is appealable. The appeal must be filed within 14 calendar days of action by the decision body.

This permit cannot be exercised until after the Coastal Commission appeal period. That appeal period ends on the above indicated date. Permittee is to contact Coastal staff at the end of the above appeal period prior to commencing any work.

A Building Permit must be obtained (if required) and construction must be initiated prior to the expiration date in order to exercise this permit. **THIS PERMIT IS NOT A BUILDING PERMIT.**

By signing this permit below, the owner agrees to accept the terms and conditions of this permit and to accept responsibility for payment of the County's costs for inspections and all other actions related to noncompliance with the permit conditions. This permit shall be null and void in the absence of the owner's signature below.

Signature of Owner/Agent

Date

Staff Planner

Date

Distribution: Applicant, File, Clerical, Coastal Commission

Return recorded form to:

Planning Department  
County of Santa Cruz  
701 Ocean Street, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor

Attention: Samantha Haschert  
Application #: 131132



2013-0046154 09/19/2013 11:28:49 AM

OFFICIAL RECORDS OF Santa Cruz County  
Sean Saldavia Recorder  
RECORDING FEE: \$30.00  
COUNTY TAX: \$0.00  
CITY TAX: \$0.00



NOTI  
6 PGS  
RCD152

Notice

THIS PAGE ADDED TO PROVIDE ADEQUATE SPACE FOR RECORDING INFORMATION  
(CALIFORNIA GOVERNMENT CODE §27361.6)

Recording requested by:

COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

When recorded, return to:

Planning Department  
Attn: Samantha Haschert  
County of Santa Cruz  
701 Ocean Street  
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

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### Conditions of Approval

Development Permit No. 131132

Property Owner: Volker Haag

Assessor's Parcel No.: 04909124

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Exhibit D: Program Statements and Maps, prepared by Volker Haag, property owner.

- I. This permit authorizes parachute landings to occur on the Agiructure (A) zoned parcel. This approval does not confer legal status on any existing structure(s) or existing use(s) on the subject property that are not specifically authorized by this permit. Prior to exercising any rights granted by this permit including, without limitation, the applicant/owner shall:
  - A. Sign, date, and return to the Planning Department one copy of the approval to indicate acceptance and agreement with the conditions thereof.
  - B. Submit proof that these conditions have been recorded in the official records of the County of Santa Cruz (Office of the County Recorder) within 30 days from the effective date of this permit.
  - C. Submit a sign plan to the County Planning Department for review and approval. The sign plan shall provide details for a new directional sign that shall be installed on the subject parcel at the frontage of the parcel, clearly visible from Calabasas Road. The sign shall comply with the requirements of County Code Section 13.10.584.
  - D. The following language shall be added to the existing signage in the Skydive Surf City main office and shall be added to the waiver or contract that is signed by the customer prior to the skydive: "No noise above a normal speaking level is permitted when under the parachute." The applicant shall submit photos of the revised signs and a copy of the revised waiver/contract to the Planning Department for review and approval prior to exercising any rights granted by this permit.
  - E. Off-street parking shall be provided for a minimum of two vehicles in addition to

the parking spaces required for the residential use. A loading area shall remain available on site to accommodate the shuttle/van.

- F. Within 30 days of the effective date of this permit, the property owner/applicant shall submit to the Planning Department a revised landing path plan that shows the descent of skydivers occurring further to the south, away from the west adjacent Residential Agricultural (RA) zoned parcels. This new landing path shall be implemented upon Planning Department approval.

## II. Operational Conditions

- A. Operations hours are limited as follows:

1. May 1<sup>st</sup> through September 30<sup>th</sup>, skydive landings shall occur only between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m., Thursday through Tuesday.
2. October 1<sup>st</sup> through April 30<sup>th</sup>, skydive landings shall occur only between the hours of 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Thursday through Tuesday.
3. No landings shall occur on Wednesdays.

- B. A maximum of four spectators shall be permitted on the site at any one time.

- C. Busses shall not be used to transport skydivers or spectators.

- D. All signage associated with the "No Yelling" policy shall remain on site and shall be maintained in a legible condition.

- E. The "No Yelling" policy shall be consistently enforced. Instructors shall discourage noise greater than a normal speaking level when under the parachute or on the ground.

- F. Skydives shall be limited to a maximum of two jumps per jump run and a maximum of 10 jump runs per day.

- G. The property owner/applicant shall notify the Planning Department within 5 days of receiving approval from the Watsonville Airport Manager to land skydivers at the airport. At that time, all skydive landings shall be made at the Watsonville Airport. APN 049-091-24 may be used only as an auxiliary landing site during times when the airport landing area is closed by the Airport Manager, unless a request is submitted by the applicant and approved by the Zoning Administrator to allow for additional landings at this site. The property owner/applicant shall mail notifications to neighbors at least 48 hours in advance of the landings occurring.

- H. This permit shall be reviewed by the Zoning Administrator at a public hearing after 6 months of operation to review condition compliance and the status of the process to land skydivers at the airport. The property owner/applicant shall submit tracking records as evidence of condition compliance and public testimony will be received. It has been noted that the business will be closed for the months of December and January; therefore, the 6 month review shall occur in April 2014.

After the 6 month review, the property owner/applicant will have the ability to submit a new application to increase the number of landings on APN 049-091-24.

- I. An update letter shall be mailed to all parcels that are located within 300 feet of the subject parcels boundaries every 2 months for one year starting on the effective date of this permit. The mailing list shall also include the county project planner and any member of the public who requests a copy of the update. The letter shall provide a status update of the approval to land skydivers at the airport. This notice is informational only and does not impact the issuance of this permit.
  - J. The operation shall comply with all applicable Federal regulations for a skydiving landing site at all times, including but not limited to lighting, signage, and markings of the landing site
- III. As a condition of this development approval, the holder of this development approval ("Development Approval Holder"), is required to defend, indemnify, and hold harmless the COUNTY, its officers, employees, and agents, from and against any claim (including attorneys' fees), against the COUNTY, its officers, employees, and agents to attack, set aside, void, or annul this development approval of the COUNTY or any subsequent amendment of this development approval which is requested by the Development Approval Holder.
- A. COUNTY shall promptly notify the Development Approval Holder of any claim, action, or proceeding against which the COUNTY seeks to be defended, indemnified, or held harmless. COUNTY shall cooperate fully in such defense. If COUNTY fails to notify the Development Approval Holder within sixty (60) days of any such claim, action, or proceeding, or fails to cooperate fully in the defense thereof, the Development Approval Holder shall not thereafter be responsible to defend, indemnify, or hold harmless the COUNTY if such failure to notify or cooperate was significantly prejudicial to the Development Approval Holder.
  - B. Nothing contained herein shall prohibit the COUNTY from participating in the defense of any claim, action, or proceeding if both of the following occur:
    - 1. COUNTY bears its own attorney's fees and costs; and
    - 2. COUNTY defends the action in good faith.
  - C. Settlement. The Development Approval Holder shall not be required to pay or perform any settlement unless such Development Approval Holder has approved the settlement. When representing the County, the Development Approval Holder shall not enter into any stipulation or settlement modifying or affecting the interpretation or validity of any of the terms or conditions of the development approval without the prior written consent of the County.
  - D. Successors Bound. "Development Approval Holder" shall include the applicant and the successor(s) in interest, transferee(s), and assign(s) of the applicant.

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Minor variations to this permit which do not affect the overall concept or density may be approved by the Planning Director at the request of the applicant or staff in accordance with Chapter 18.10 of the County Code.



**Please note: This permit expires three years from the effective date listed below unless the conditions of approval are complied with and the use commences before the expiration date.**

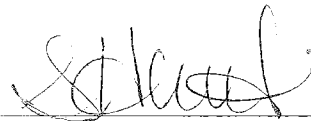
Approval Date: 8/2/2013

Effective Date: 8/16/2013

Expiration Date: 8/16/2016



Wanda Williams  
Deputy Zoning Administrator



Samantha Haschert  
Project Planner

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Appeals: Any property owner, or other person aggrieved, or any other person whose interests are adversely affected by any act or determination of the Zoning Administrator, may appeal the act or determination to the Planning Commission in accordance with chapter 18.10 of the Santa Cruz County Code.

By signing below, the owner agrees to accept the terms and conditions of approval of Application 131132 and to accept responsibility for payment of the County's cost for inspections and all other action related to noncompliance with the permit condition. The approval of Application 131132 is null and void in the absence of the owner's signature below.

Executed on September 19, 2013  
(date)

Property Owner(s) signatures:

V. Haag  
(Signature)

VOLKER HAAG  
(Print Name)

(Signature)

(Print Name)

(Signature)

(Print Name)

**ALL SIGNATURES ARE TO BE ACKNOWLEDGED BEFORE A NOTARY PUBLIC.  
IF A CORPORATION, THE CORPORATE FORM OF ACKNOWLEDGMENT  
SHALL BE ATTACHED.**

STATE OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ} ss

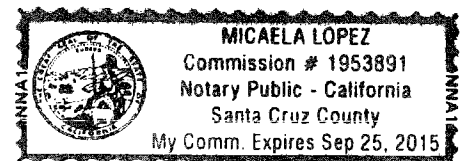
On September 19, 2013, before me, Micaela Lopez, Notary Public, personally appeared Volker Haag, who proved to me on the basis of satisfactory evidence to be the person(s) whose name(s) is/are subscribed to the within instrument and acknowledged to me that he/she/they executed the same in his/her/their authorized capacity(ies), and that by his/her/their signature on the instrument the person(s), or the entity upon behalf of which the person(s) acted, executed the instrument.

I certify under PENALTY OF PERJURY under the laws of the State of California that the foregoing paragraph is true and correct.

Witness my hand and official seal.

Signature

[Signature]  
(Signature of Notary Public)



This form must be reviewed and approved by a County Planning Department staff person after notarization and prior to recordation.

Dated: 9/19/13

COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

By:

[Signature]  
Planning Department Staff

DIRECTIONAL SIGN

9" x 12"

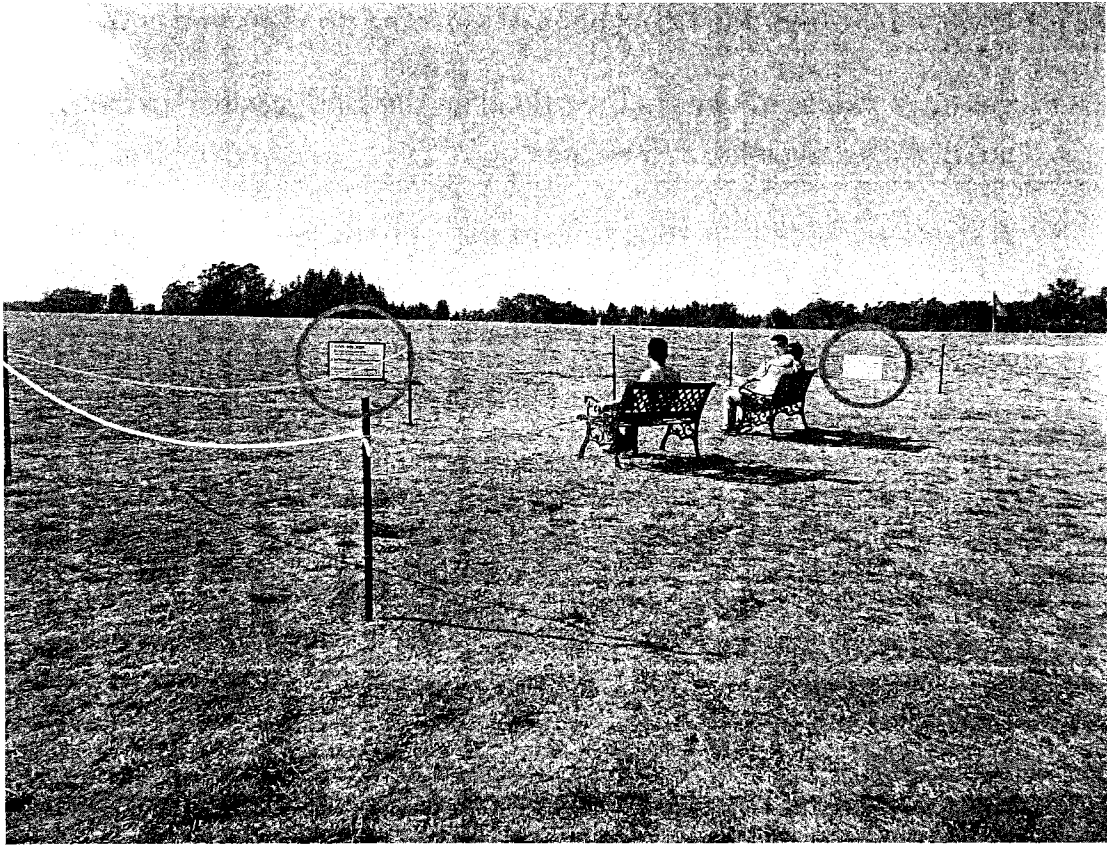


**APN 049-091-24: Condition I.D.: Changed wording on signs and waivers**

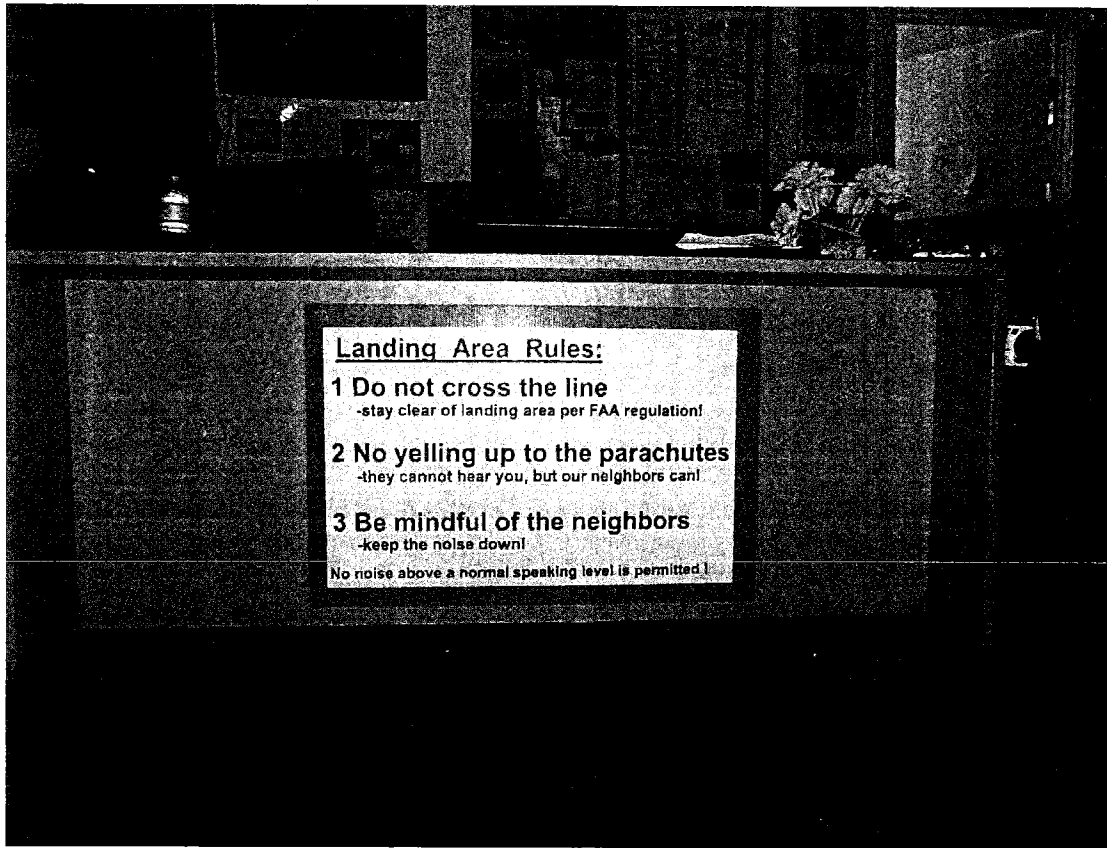
- We have multiple signs in the office, on the landing site (spectator area), in the airplane, in the van.
- Waiver: we added the required verbiage on the wiver agreement
- More important than signs and contract: we continuously enforce the noise abatement rules



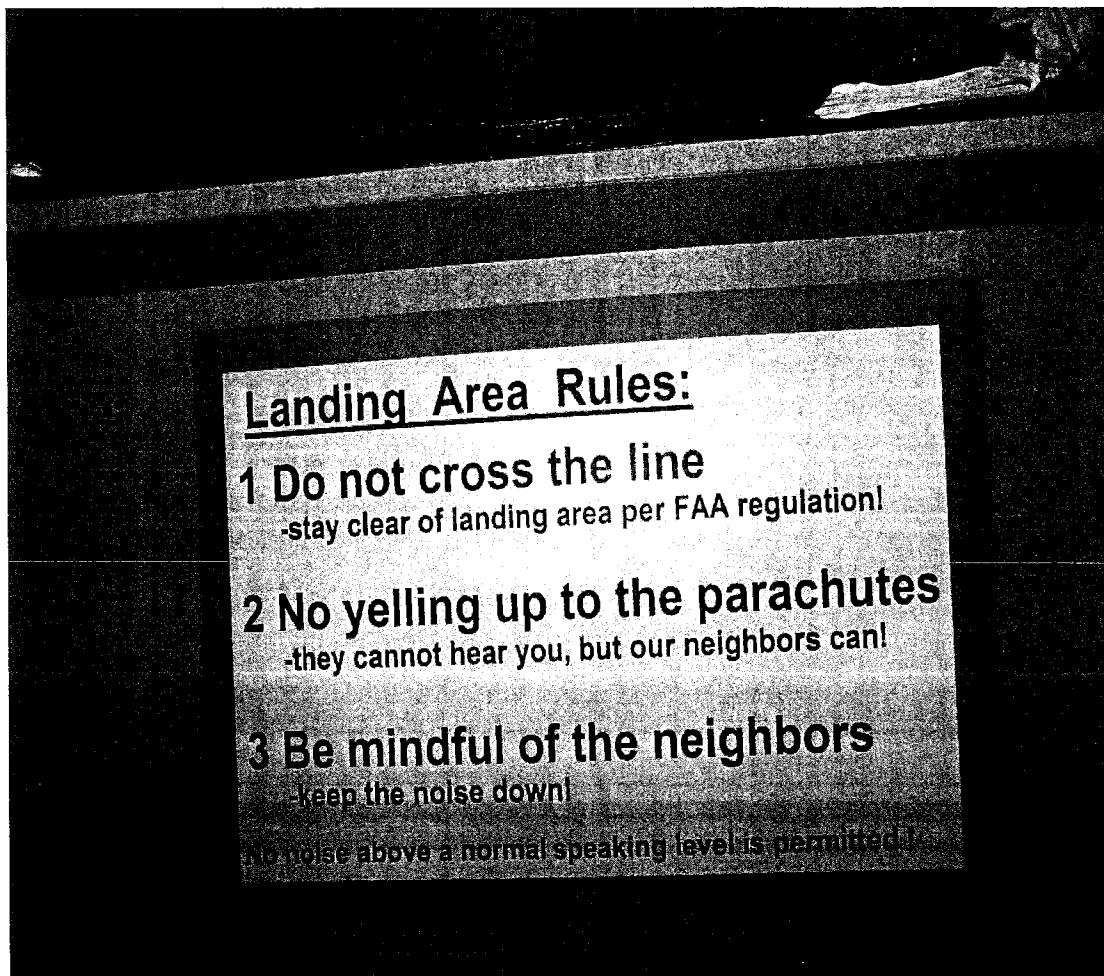
landing area sign close up shot, with added wording



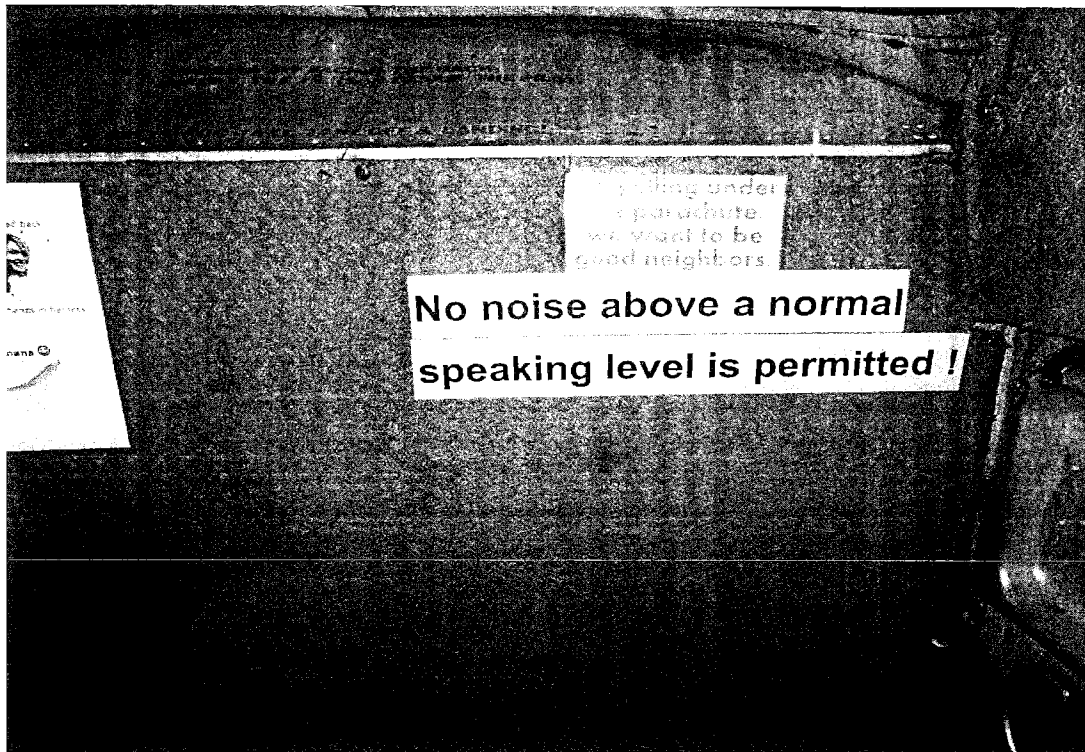
**2 signs on landing area, in spectator area**



sign in office



office sign close-up



**sign in airplane**

Airport rules and regulations. **INITIAL**\_\_\_\_\_

#### **NOISE ABATEMENT**

I understand and accept that yelling and screaming is prohibited on the ground, after landing, as well as in mid-air after the parachute has opened. No noise above normal speaking level is permitted when under parachute. I agree to follow these rules in order to keep down the noise level for neighbors surrounding our landing areas. **INITIAL**\_\_\_\_\_

#### **LOST OR STOLEN ITEMS**

I understand and accept that "Skydive Surfcity LLC" cannot be held responsible for the loss or theft of personal items left in our facilities or your car while parked on or off our parking lot. **INITIAL**\_\_\_\_\_

#### **Waiver agreement**



## Samantha Haschert

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**From:** volker [volker@skydivesurfcity.com]  
**Sent:** Friday, November 08, 2013 5:17 PM  
**To:** Samantha Haschert  
**Subject:** of street parking for 2 vehicles.  
**Attachments:** parking.pdf

Hello Samantha

Please find attached a document showing how we implemented the "off-street parking" condition. This also shows how we have relocated the small spectator area which **seats 4 people**.

**Both the spectator area as well as the 2 off-street parking lots are down hill from the landing area. They are 100% not visible from the neighbors...this relocation was done to further reduce the impact we have on the neighbors!**

Thanks

Volker

**APN 049-091-24: Condition Off-street parking for 2 vehicles**

- We hardly ever have vehicles drive up here. In the rare case that there are any specators, they drive in our van --> no parking would have been needed!
- **To comply with the conditions: we created 2 off-street parking spaces that are 100% out of sight for neighbors!**
- **Also we moved the spectator area: it is now also 100% out of sight from the neighbors**

**--> moving the parking lot and spectator area out of sight from neighbors was done to further reduce any impact on the neighbors!!**



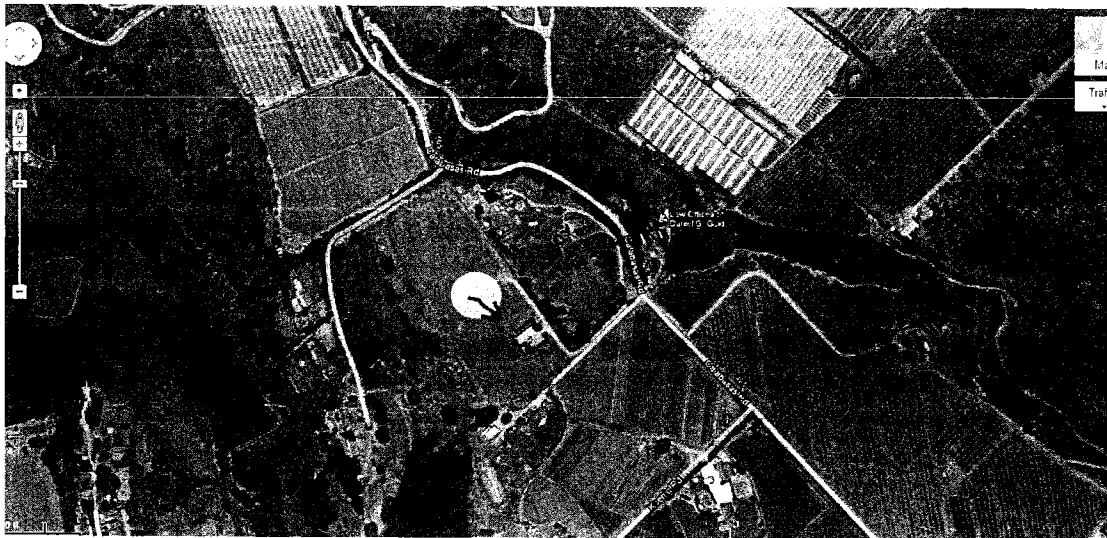
off street parking for 2 vehicles and relocated the spectator area (also please note the "no noise" signs)



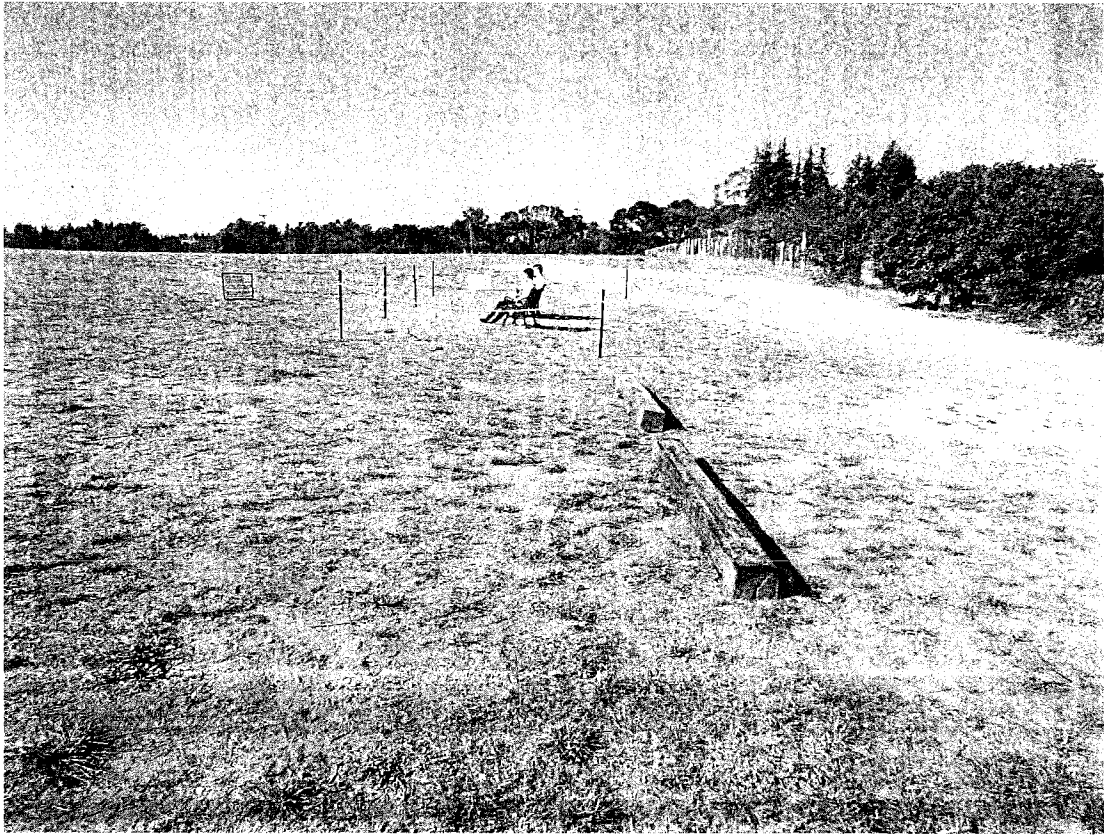
close up parking sign

**APN 049-091-24: Moved spectator area, and designated landing area further away from neighbors**

- We moved the designated landing area south/east and also moved the specator area
- Huge benefit: moving the spectator area "down hill", completely out of sight of the neighbor --> less impact, less sound
- the designated landing pattern, flight pass was moved further away



**moved designated landing area and spectator area**



spectator area for 4 people max, 2 off-street parking lots, moved away and out of sight of neighbors

## **Samantha Haschert**

---

**From:** volker [volker@skydivesurfcity.com]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 12, 2013 4:52 PM  
**To:** Samantha Haschert  
**Subject:** please use this one with the spelling of the headline corrected :-)  
**Attachments:** condition\_I\_F\_landing\_pattern.pdf

Subject: Condition I.F. moved landing approach paths (flight patters) away from the west adjacent Residential Agricultural (RA) zoned parcels

Hello Samantha,

please find attached a document portraying our parachute landing approaches. The approaches have been altered after the county in order to be well clear and away from the west adjacent Residential Agricultural (RA) zoned parcels

These changes were implemented immediately after the hearing. I have recently talked to Nancy Stinnett. She was the lady that had a concern about us overflying the pond on the west adjacent Residential Agricultural (RA) zoned parcels. Nancy has told me over the phone that she had not seen us over the pond since the county hearing. She also told me that she was impressed how quiet it has gotten. Feel free to contact her to confirm this.

Thanks

Volker  
831.331.9150

**APN 049-091-24 Condition I.F. changed landing approach paths (flight patterns)**

- We have moved the spectator area away from the west adjacent Residential Agricultural (RA) zoned parcels (see documentation: spectator area) --> therefore the landing area and flight patterns moved too
- We have moved the landing pattern entry corridor away from the west adjacent Residential Agricultural (RA) zoned parcels
- We have identified 2 approaches (see the graphs on the next 2 pages) One that we use 90% of the time (prevailing wind direction) and one that we use 10% of the time. Both avoid the west adjacent Residential Agricultural (RA) zoned parcels

Approach 1: This one is used roughly 90% of the time when we have a sea breeze wind from the west. This is on most days almost all the time!

Changes:

- We have designated a much smaller corridor for the flight approach into the landing pattern (the thicker purple line in the graphs).
- This corridor is further to the south away from the west adjacent Residential Agricultural (RA) zoned parcels. So we enter the necessary landing pattern further away from the properties to the west!

Approach 2: This one is used roughly 10% of the times usually only for 2 weeks in spring and fall and sometimes randomly (but rarely) in the late afternoons. When we have the wind come from inland. We approach completely away from the west adjacent Residential Agricultural (RA) zoned parcels.

Generally speaking for both approaches:

- We open the parachutes at 5,000 ft upwind of the landing area (see yellow arrows indicating the prevailing wind directions)
- Then we fly to the thick purple lines (approach corridor) to access the necessary landing pattern in order to land on the landing area

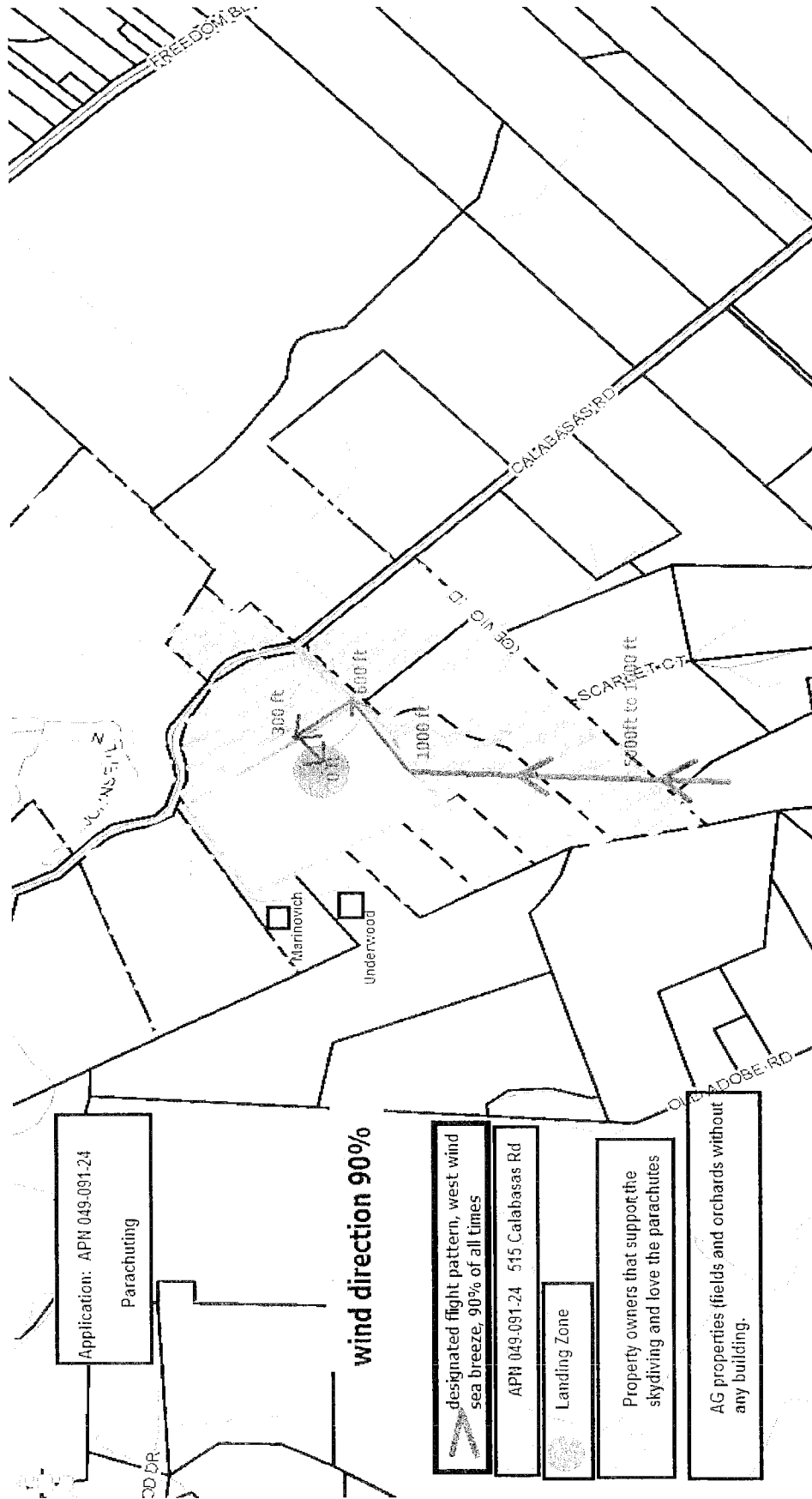
- We roughly have to land into the wind (every time!)--> we follow a defined landing pattern ("purple box") --> this pattern is required by physics!
- We don't overfly the neighbors' houses located west of the landing area
- We also avoid the pond west of us (on the Underwood property)
- **We never are above anybody's property below 1000 ft.**

Reminder: The FAA regulates airspace above 500 ft in the surrounding area.

Parachuting is a federally recognized aeronautical activity. FAA regulation applies to parachutists while using this airspace. We have approval to use this airspace by the FAA.

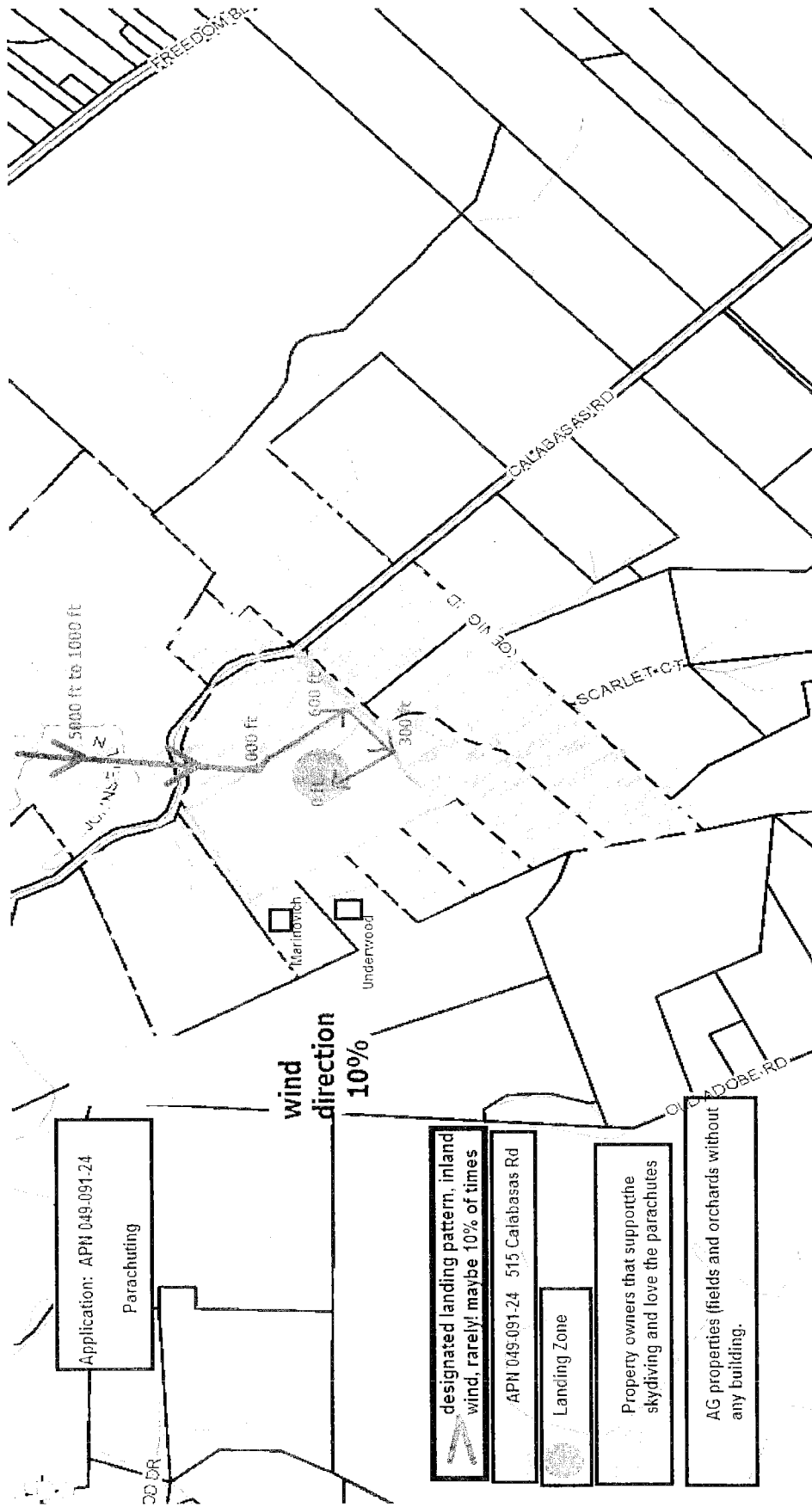


**APN 049-091-24 Approach 1: used 90% of all times ---> West wind direction**



**Note:** The altitudes in purple indicate the parachute locations above ground level when in the landing flight pattern. These altitudes are dictated by the flight characteristics of the parachutes --> which are governed by the design specifications of the parachutes --> which are governed by physics !--> In order to land on the designated landing area altitudes can simply not be any other way!

APN 049-091-24 Approach 2 : used 10 % of all times --> Inland wind direction



**Note:** The altitudes in purple indicate the parachute locations above ground level when in the landing flight pattern. These altitudes are dictated by the flight characteristics of the parachutes --> which are governed by the design specifications of the parachutes --> which are governed by physics ! --> In order to land on the designated landing area altitudes can simply not be any other way!

**Permit 131132—Condition II.H: Flight Path Tracking Records**

Permit condition II.H. defines the purpose of the April hearing which is the review of compliance with conditions. Condition II.H is also asking for a way to track the re-located flight path as defined in Condition I.F. The objective of a relocation of the parachute flight path was to be “away from the west adjacent Residential Agricultural (RA) zoned parcels”.

**About the relocated flight path:**

We have experimented with different flight paths and have identified two standard paths that are well “away from the west adjacent Residential Agricultural (RA) zoned properties”. These new plans have been submitted to the county as a file: “condition\_I\_F\_landing\_pattern.pdf” in which we define 2 standard landing approach patterns. Approach 1 being used in 90% of jumps with a prevailing ground wind coming from the West or South. If the Wind shifts to the South like in this GPS example below, the final landing pattern will turn by 90 degrees into the wind. This is done because we always have to land into the wind. This is mandated by the laws of physics. Approach 2 is rarely used, only when the winds shift and are coming from the North/ East, in which case we would approach from the the North/ East side of the landing area. We would be even farther away from the west adjacent residential parcel.

**Tracking Method**

GPS tracking gives us the benefit of being able to track and record the exact location of our skydivers during a parachute descent. For an untrained individual it can be hard to judge the exact location of a parachute in the sky. GPS tracking and gps data graphing can help to take out the guess work in regards to the location of our parachutes relative to the west adjacent properties in question.

Problems: We have experimented with several different GPS tracking devices. It is very complicated to use a GPS systems to track parachutes. Most devices were too big for us to carry. Smaller GPS devices would frequently lose the GPS signal and achieved only intermittent results.

In January, we received a demo GPS from a Canadian Company called Bionic Avionics Inc. This device was developed to track wingsuit-base jumping and can maintain satellite connection when skydiving. The main problem is how to carry the devices on the jumps safely.

**Process :**

- 1 I put the GPS device into one of our Skydiving containers without telling the instructors and recorded their parachute flight path.
- 2 Download the data onto a computer.
- 3 Use a software called GPS Babel to convert the 1000s of GPS Waypoint datasets into a KML-File which can be recognized by online mapping tools (for example Google Earth)
- 4 Open the KML-file in Google Earth
- 5 See the exact route the parachute flies
- 6 We can click on the waypoints of the track and go back to the data set to find out information like speed and altitude to pinpoint the exact location of the parachute relative to the residences in the West.

Using the above described method we have looked up altitudes for multiple waypoints and have added altitudes in feet into the graph. We have also added yellow arrows to show the direction of flight. The red cross indicates the residential properties that we are strictly avoiding in our flights. The green box are west adjacent Residential Agricultural (RA) zoned parcels whose owner is a supporter of our operation.



### Summary:

This example shows GPS tracking for a standard “approach1” as defined in the document “condition\_1\_F\_landing\_pattern.pdf” “with the final landing pattern turned by 90degrees to land into the southerly ground wind.

The objective of this standard approach is to shift the landing pattern entry corridor as far away as possible from the west adjacent parcels. The GPS tracking data reflects that the conditions objectives has been accomplished. We are never over these properties. In fact, we are more than 3300 ft away from the residences in question.

Our final landing pattern is moved to the South and East. On every jump, we slightly adjust our flight pattern according to the wind. Flight characteristics of the parachute systems (physics) mandate the final flightpath....it cannot be any other way. While safety is and will remain our first priority, staying as far away as possible from the west adjacent Residential Agricultural (RA) zoned properties is our 2<sup>nd</sup> priority.

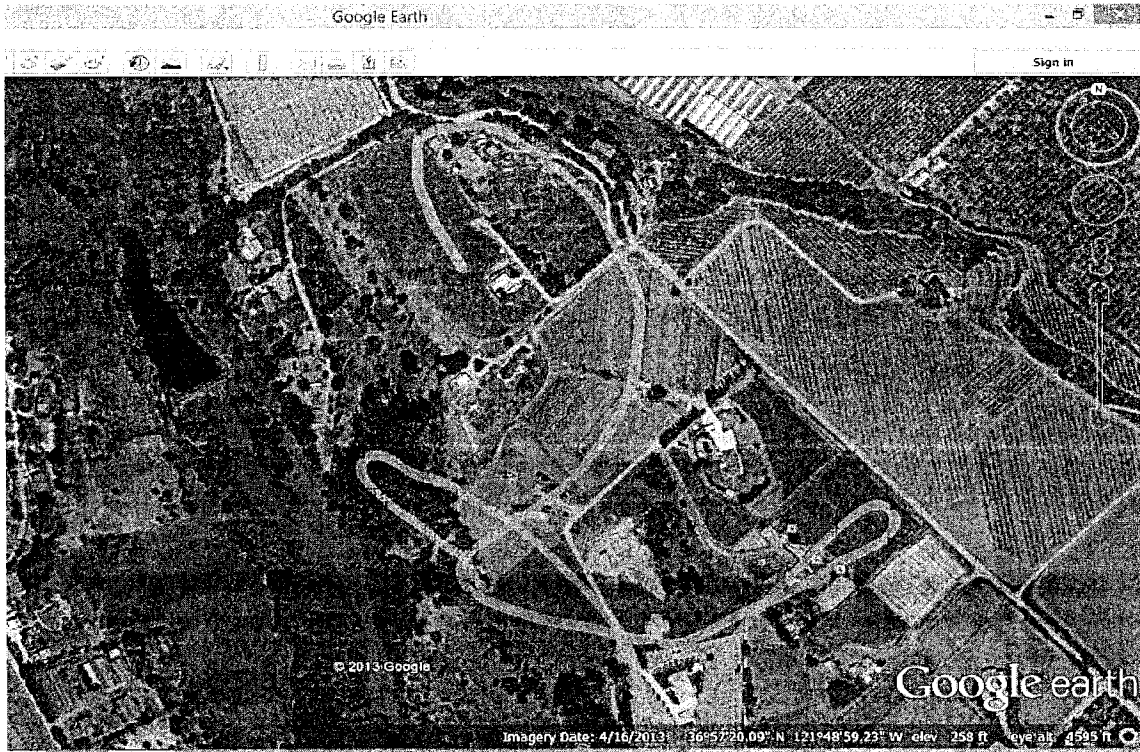
Our instructors do an outstanding job in enforcing the “new flight path rule”. We have put up a “flight path sign” in our gear up area and discuss this rule in the daily flight briefings. We will continue to monitor our instructors using a GPS system periodically.

Volker Haag

The below example using recorded GPS data from a jump that took place on January 16<sup>th</sup> 2014. Prevailing ground winds had shifted to the south. Approach 1 (as defined in document condition\_l\_F\_landing\_pattern.pdf) is in place. The final landing pattern is turned by 90 degrees to land into the wind.

### GPS Track:

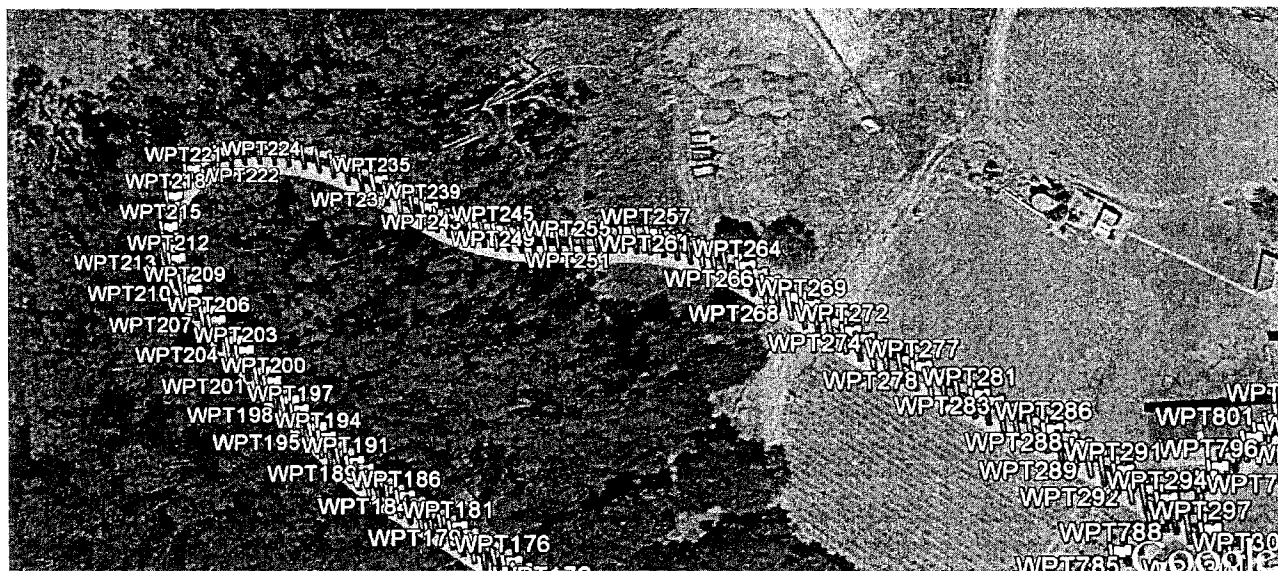
The below blue line represent the **GPS track** that Google earth generates out of the KML file



Remarks: The Imagery date on the bottom of the page is not the jump date but the date that the aerial photograph was taken for the Google Earth website.

On the next page we will look what kind of data his “hidden” in this track, and how we can use that data.

**Getting the waypoints:** Here is what happen when you zoom in: The waypoint numbers become visible



We can go back into the **data base** (below) to look at altitudes, times, gps coordinates, speeds, rate of descent, etc. For example waypoint WPT 221. This is the closest waypoint to the west adjacent Residential Agricultural (RA) zoned properties!

| 1   | time,lat ,lon,hMSL,velN,velE,velD,hAcc,vAcc,sAcc,gpsFix,numSV                                 |
|-----|---|
| 213 | 2014-01-16T23:00:48.40Z,36.9516259,-121.8114102,1016.736,9.14,-5.64,2.84,2.567,2.803,0.92,3,8 |
| 214 | 2014-01-16T23:00:48.60Z,36.9516426,-121.8114213,1016.085,9.28,-4.88,2.92,2.565,2.796,0.95,3,8 |
| 215 | 2014-01-16T23:00:48.80Z,36.9516594,-121.8114306,1015.396,9.39,-4.06,3.04,2.569,2.797,0.98,3,8 |
| 216 | 2014-01-16T23:00:49.00Z,36.9516766,-121.8114379,1014.682,9.57,-3.14,3.18,2.574,2.806,0.99,3,8 |
| 217 | 2014-01-16T23:00:49.20Z,36.9516939,-121.8114425,1013.935,9.65,-2.02,3.42,2.579,2.816,1.00,3,8 |
| 218 | 2014-01-16T23:00:49.40Z,36.9517117,-121.8114449,1013.035,9.76,-0.91,3.75,2.586,2.830,1.01,3,8 |
| 219 | 2014-01-16T23:00:49.60Z,36.9517293,-121.8114450,1011.996,9.70,0.18,4.14,2.591,2.838,1.00,3,8  |
| 220 | 2014-01-16T23:00:49.80Z,36.9517471,-121.8114425,1010.861,9.76,1.44,4.58,2.594,2.839,0.98,3,8  |
| 221 | 2014-01-16T23:00:50.00Z,36.9517649,-121.8114370,1009.608,9.83,2.89,5.01,2.596,2.840,0.91,3,8  |
| 222 | 2014-01-16T23:00:50.20Z,36.9517820,-121.8114290,1008.198,9.58,4.12,5.43,2.590,2.831,0.83,3,9  |
| 223 | 2014-01-16T23:00:50.40Z,36.9517983,-121.8114184,1006.714,9.29,5.34,5.87,2.587,2.825,0.81,3,9  |
| 224 | 2014-01-16T23:00:50.60Z,36.9518134,-121.8114050,1005.059,8.77,6.70,6.41,2.577,2.814,0.74,3,9  |
| 225 | 2014-01-16T23:00:50.80Z,36.9518267,-121.8113883,1003.366,7.94,8.07,6.82,2.567,2.805,0.68,3,9  |
| 226 | 2014-01-16T23:00:51.00Z,36.9518379,-121.8113686,1001.630,6.85,9.26,7.17,2.552,2.801,0.64,3,9  |

At WPT 221 (row 221) we find an altitude of 1009.6 meters which equals 3312 feet. So, during this flight's approach path, at the closest point to the west adjacent Residential Agricultural (RA) zoned parcels, the altitude of the parachute was 3312 feet high. It is important to emphasize that the parachutes were not directly above the parcel at this altitude or even close to them!) In fact, the closest horizontal distances during the approach path are 630ft from the Underwood residence and 800ft from the Marinovich residence.

Using basic algebra (Pythagorean Theorem), the total distances are 3371ft to the Underwood residence and 3470 ft to the Marinovich residence, respectively. The parachutes did not overfly the parcels at all.

From:  
Volker Haag  
515 Calabasas Rd.  
Watsonville, CA 95076

November 3, 2013

To:  
Neighbors of 515 Calabasas Road,

### **Parachute Landing Area Progress Report**

Dear Neighbors of 515 Calabasas Road,

This letter is to inform you about the status of the approval process that is required to land our parachutes onto the Watsonville Airport. Upon approval, we will be landing onto the airfield as an alternative to landing on our current landing area located on 515 Calabasas Road in Watsonville.

#### **Why are you receiving this letter?**

You are receiving this letter as close neighbors of the current landing area which is located on Calabasas Road. The County of Santa Cruz requires us (as the property owners) to send out an update letter like this to all close neighbors as well as the planning department every two months. This is a condition for our permit to land parachutes onto the field located at 515 Calabasas Road.

If you do not wish to receive this letter or if you have any questions or concerns about the current landing area located at 515 Calabasas Road, or about the future landing area onto the Watsonville Airport, please do not hesitate to contact us at 831.331.9150 or sent an email to volker@skydivesurfcity.com

#### **Landing parachutes onto a federally funded airport: General Information**

In general, FAA regulation clearly states that parachute operations (as federally recognized aeronautical activities) can be conducted onto un-towered airfields like the Watsonville Airport, as long as the parachuting operator is in compliance with all relevant FAA regulation. It is ultimately the airport managers decision to approve or disapprove a parachute landing area on the airfield.

However, being a federally funded airport, the Watsonville Airport is actually required to allow equal access to all federally acknowledged aeronautical activities (including parachuting) in order to keep the federal airport funding. In other words, if the Watsonville Airport Administration denies access to land parachutes on the Airfield, there is a formal complaint process that could ultimately cause the City of Watsonville to lose the federal airport funding, unless there was evidence that a parachute landing area on the airport is either not safe or not efficient.

#### **Status of the process to be approved to land our parachuted on the Watsonville Airport**

- We have originally requested access to land our parachutes onto the Watsonville Airport as early as Winter/Spring 2010
- After originally being denied access, we filed an informal complaint with the FAA
- The FAA stepped in and has encouraged talks between the airport management and Skydive Surfcity LLC to avoid going through the complicated complaint process and to avoid further delays
- The new airport management is working with Skydive Surfcity LLC to go through the process
- We are well on our way working through the process and have recently been able to make significant progress. (see milestones)

## Milestones

### August 15, 2013 FAA Safety Review conducted

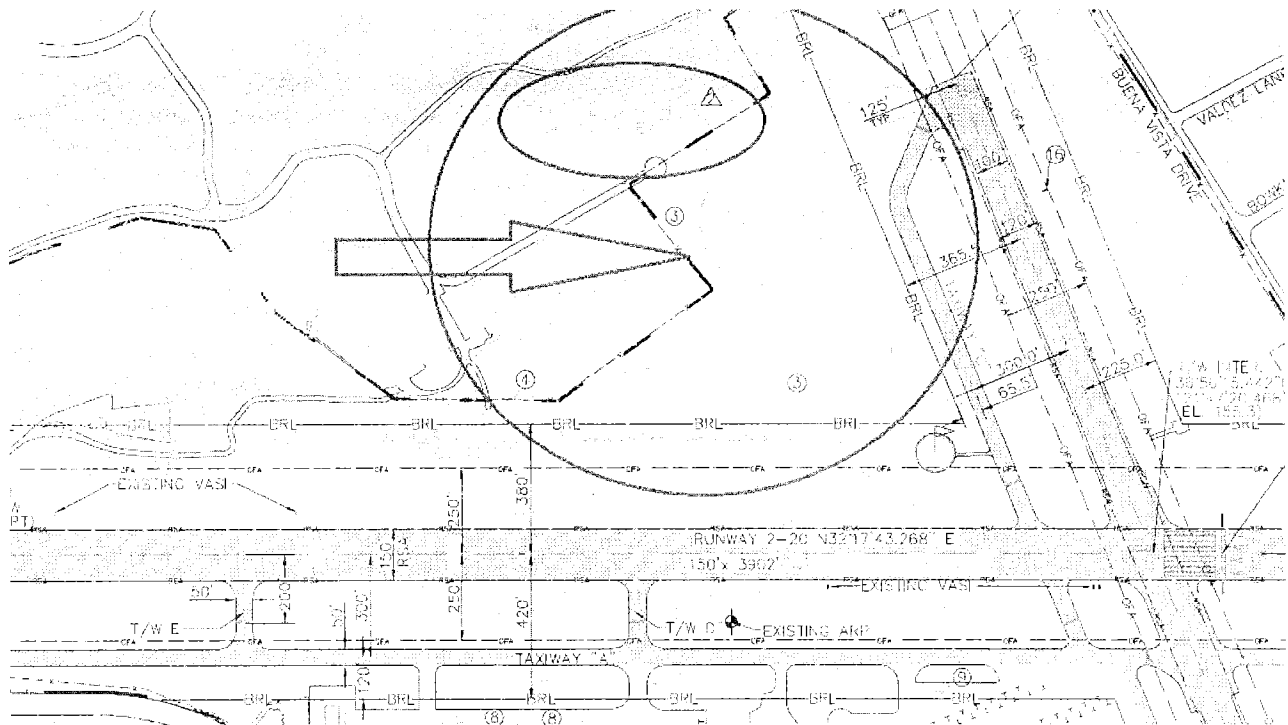
- The San Jose Flight Standards Districts Office (FAA) had sent out four inspectors to conduct a safety review on Skydive Surfcity LLC and the proposed parachute operations onto the Watsonville Airport.
- Multiple skydives and parachute landings have been conducted onto the airfield into our proposed future parachute landing area
- Everything went smooth → we passed (see next item)

### August 28, 2013: Positive safety review result.

- The San Jose Flight Standards Districts Office (FAA) wrote a letter to the Airport management. → **The FAA attests that the inspectors could not identify a safety concern with our operation.** The letter reads: "The safety review that was conducted on August 15, 2013 found no hazardous conditions that would prevent *this type of aeronautical operation* from being conducted at the Watsonville Airport" → **the FAA did not have any safety concerns about parachute operations onto the Watsonville Airport.**

### End of September 2013: Addition of a parachute landing area on the airport layout plan

- The Watsonville Airport has officially put a parachute landing area onto their Airport Layout Plan (ALP). See ALP below. The red arrow indicates the location of the parachute landing area just west of the runway 2/20.



→ The Watsonville Airport has formally put a "parachute landing area" on the current Airport Layout Plan!



Currently the new ALP is under review by the FAA airports district office. Three points are noteworthy when looking at potential outcomes of this review:

- 1 There are numerous changes to the ALP that are being reviewed. The added parachute landing area is a relatively small part.
- 2 The FAA has already regulation in place that allows and governs parachute operations on un-towered airports → this is nothing out of the ordinary
- 3 A recent safety review conducted by the FAA did not identify any safety hazards and stated that parachuting operations can be conducted on the Watsonville airport.

Due to these 3 points we have no reason to believe that the ALP will not get approved.

This review process normally takes around 6 weeks. There is a possibility that this review process will be delayed due to the government shut-down and sequestration. We will give an update in the next letter.

#### **Status Summary**

- Skydive Surfcity LLC is working diligently with the FAA and the Watsonville Airport to work through the process
- Skydive Surfcity LLC and its parachute operation has passed a safety review by the FAA. This will make a denial to land onto the Watsonville Airport due to safety concerns very unlikely if not impossible.
- The Watsonville Airport has officially defined a designated area for parachute landings in the ALP.

#### **Next Steps**

- We are patiently waiting for the FAA to approve the ALP. The official review period is 6 weeks so a result could be expected in late November. However due to government shutdown and sequestration this could be delayed.
- As soon as the ALP is formally approved we can tackle the next hurdle, an environmental assessment that might be necessary as the Watsonville Airport is a natural habitat for endangered species. However we will only know after the ALP has been formally approved. We will give an update on this in the next letter.

#### **Timeline: How long will this process take?**

The government shutdown and sequestration have slowed down many federal processes, including ours. Nevertheless, we were able to make great progress in the past few months. The ALP and the safety review are huge! We will not be operating for 2 months in the winter. This will give us extra time to push this process further. We will send an update letter in January and hope to be able to communicate timing commitments from the FAA.

We truly appreciate all our neighbors' support. Please do not hesitate to contact us should you have any questions or concerns.

Best Regards

Volker Haag  
831.331.9150

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C/O E R MANN INC  
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SILVA ROBERT S/M SS  
557 CALABASAS RD  
WATSONVILLE, CA 95076

From:  
Volker Haag  
515 Calabasas Rd.  
Watsonville, CA 95076

January 21, 2013

To: Neighbors of 515 Calabasas Road,

**Parachute landing area progress report 2**

Dear Neighbors of 515 Calabasas Road,

This letter is an update to my more detailed November letter. If you need another copy of my November letter, please let me know and I will be glad to send you another copy.

As you may recall, the next step is for the FAA to respond to the application of the City of Watsonville, which manages the airport, for approval of the Airport Layout Plan (ALP). The airport manager believes it is very likely that the FAA will respond by the end of January and that the ALP will be approved. At that point environmental review can take place.

If you have questions, or do not wish to receive these periodic progress reports please do not hesitate to contact me at 831.331.9150 or sent an email to [volker@skydivesurfcity.com](mailto:volker@skydivesurfcity.com)

Best Regards



Volker Haag  
831.331.9150

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WATSONVILLE, CA 95076

From:  
Volker Haag  
515 Calabasas Rd.  
Watsonville, CA 95076

March 19, 2014

To: Neighbors of 515 Calabasas Road,

### **Parachute landing area progress report 3**

Dear Neighbors of 515 Calabasas Road,

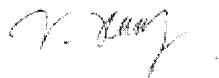
As you know, the County instructed me to send periodic reports to my neighbors about my securing permission to make parachute drops at the Watsonville Airport.

My request was made long ago to the City of Watsonville, which owns and operates the airport, but the City also needs FAA approval. The first step is for the FAA to approve the Airport Layout Plan (ALP), which designated the landing area. The City of Watsonville, many months ago, requested formal approval of the ALP. The Airport Manager, for the last few months, has believed the formal FAA approval would be issued "very soon," but apparently because of FAA backlog, the formal approval has not been issued, although it is still expected any time. An internal e-mail, dated February 4, 2014, stated: "The ALP showing the parachute landing zone has been air spaced and is up to the ADO's approval. Mr. Williams [the Airport Manager] is aware of the status that the ALP will be approved very soon."

After the ALP is formally approved, but not before, the City can start the last part of the process, which is an environmental clearance.

If you have questions, or do not wish to receive these periodic progress reports, please do not hesitate to contact me at [831.331.9150](tel:831.331.9150) or send an email to [volker@skydivesurfcity.com](mailto:volker@skydivesurfcity.com)

Best Regards



Volker Haag

February 25, 2014

Samantha Haschert, Project Planner  
County Planning Department  
701 Ocean Street, Fourth Floor  
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Reference: Application No. 131132; APN 049-091-24  
Hearing Date: April 4, 2014

Dear Ms. Haschert:

The purpose of this hearing is defined in the formal Permit Conditions, in item II (H). I have attached a copy of the final conditions, which were Exhibit C to the permit issued August 2, 2013. Although it is tempting to submit information that buttresses the presentation I made at the original hearing, this letter will be limited to the purposes articulated in Permit Condition II(H) – review of compliance with conditions. I hope those who speak at the hearing will be reminded that it is the only relevant subject of the hearing and that the hearing is not an opportunity to re-argue issues that have been decided.

The following uses the numbering system contained in the conditions. “Done” means that a condition which requires a single action has been completed. “We are complying” means that since the permit issuance, I and my employees have and are complying with the particular condition. Those conditions that require the submission of additional information are explained below in appropriate detail.

#### I. Conditions

- A. Copy of signed approval returned. Done.
- B. Proof of recordation of conditions. Done.
- C. Sign and submit plan and install directional sign. Done.
- D. Addition of specific verbiage to waiver/contract signed by customers. Done. Photos of the installed sign were sent to you on November 8, 2013.
- E. Offstreet parking for two vehicles plus loading area. Done. We have created offstreet parking for two to three vehicles with parking signs and directional signs. We also enlarged the turnaround loading area for our van. We have exceeded the requirements by

moving the parking area downhill to the south. The new parking area is invisible from the Underwood and the Marinovich properties.

F. Submit revised landing path and illustrative plan. Done. The adjusted flight plan for landing paths sent to you on November 12, 2014. We have, and are, implementing that plan. Incidentally, as a result of the update letters required by Condition II (I), we have received a number of comments from neighbors about the flight path. All were favorable. Please let me know if you would like those to be forwarded or summarized.

## II. Operational Conditions

A. Operational hours. We are complying.

B. Four spectator limitation. We are complying.

C. No use of buses. We are complying.

D. "No Yelling" signing maintained and legible. We are complying. We are exceeding this condition's requirements as we also have installed: 1) signs in the aircraft, 2) Signs in our van for spectators, and 3) Signs in the spectator area at the landing site.

E. "No Yelling" policy and discouragement of noise. We are complying. We include the "no noise rule" in the training sessions on the ground, remind the jumpers verbally in the plane and via the signs, and we enforce it "under the parachute".

F. Limitation of number of jump runs. We are complying.

G. This condition concerns actions that will occur after approval of Airport Manager for landing at the airport, which, as explained in an attachment, is an event that has not yet occurred. Although the Manager, Mr. Williams, himself is in favor, at least one other agency's approval is a prerequisite to the Airport Manager's formal authorization.

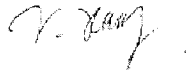
H. As mentioned in my first paragraph, Condition H requires and limits this public hearing. In addition to the foregoing, there is a requirement for tracking records on the re-located flight path and information on the "status of the process to land skydivers at the airport." A report on the latter is attached and labeled "Airport Parachute Landing Status Report." "Flight Path Tracking Records" will be supplied separately by Friday, February 28.

I. Letters to neighbors. Periodic update letters have been sent to you, to all persons shown on the mailing list supplied by the Planning Department, and to the only other person who has requested a copy—Nancy Stinnett. Another letter will be sent in mid-March.

J. Compliance with federal regulations. Our operation is in compliance with FAA regulations. Our operation has only recently undergone a tough safety review by the FAA that we passed with "flying colors."

Please let me know if you need any further information.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'V. Haag'.

Volker Haag

Attachments:

Final Conditions, Exhibit C

Airport Parachute Landing Report



## MEMORANDUM

To: Samantha Haschert

From: Richard Manning

Date: February 27, 2014

Subject: STATUS REPORT REGARDING ESTABLISHMENT OF SKYDIVING  
AT WATSONVILLE AIRPORT

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Attached is a February 4, 2014 e-mail from FAA official Anthony Garcia, which is a status report on this subject. This memo will provide the information that will be helpful to fully understand Mr. Garcia's message. Skydive Surf City has been diligently working on getting approval for parachute landings at the airport. The Airport Manager, Rayvon Williams, thought the next appropriate step to that end was to have the skydiving activity and landing area designated on the Airport Layout Plan ("ALP"). That plan delineates the activities which the FAA has approved to occur at the airport. The inclusion of the parachute landing area was one of several proposed changes included by the City in the application sent to the FAA in approximately September 2013. (Because of FAA procedures, it is much more efficient for the City to combine all requested changes in one application rather than to submit a series of one-purpose applications.)

Those knowledgeable with FAA procedures on this and nearly every other subject inform me that the time it is taking the FAA to respond to applications of almost any sort is steadily growing, so that the FAA response time on this matter is much slower than was anticipated by the airport management. This is reflected in the attached e-mail from FAA official Anthony Garcia in which he says "Mr. Williams [the Airport Manager] is aware of the status that the ALP will be approved very soon."

The next step after ALP modification approval is, as Mr. Garcia's e-mail states, clearing these matters with the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service and perhaps the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. The procedural vehicle for dealing with the former is a CATEX (Categorical Exemption). As I understand matters, from my discussion with the environmental consultant retained by the City to Watsonville to deal with airport matters, virtually any new physical activity that may occur in the airport needs to be reviewed for compliance with federal environmental regulations because the FAA is the regulatory agency for all airports in the U. S. Apparently a few years ago City plans for the airport were disrupted by federal authorities because of environmental regulations. As a result, the City is very conscientious about such matters. The federal interest is because the airport is designated by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service as a "critical habitat" area. The concern is the tar plant, the salamander and the red-legged frog. It is my understanding that none of those species exist in the proposed parachute landing area; however, the Fish and Wildlife designation is for the airport as a whole; individual areas of the airport are not separately desig-

nated until it is necessary to do so. Consequently, the City of Watsonville will have to go through the CATEX process before the underlying activity can actually be commenced. The consultant is, at this point, unsure of whether or not any separate procedures will be required with the State of California. It is impossible to get even an informal reaction from the state because the state wants to first see the work product of the federal environmental authorities. Often those are sufficient and the state does not need any separate involvement.

I hope the foregoing is useful in understanding Mr. Garcia's attached status report.

RM/dm

----- Forwarded Message

**From:** Kathy Brockman <kathy.brockman@faa.gov>

**Date:** Tue, 4 Feb 2014 15:23:14 -0500

**To:** Randy Ottinger <randyo@uspa.org>

**Cc:** Kevin Willis <kevin.willis@faa.gov>, Tony Garcia <anthony.garcia@faa.gov>

**Subject:** Fw: Status Report Regarding the Establishment of Skydiving at Watsonville

Randy,

Below is an update on Watsonville.

Kathy

Kathleen Brockman  
Airport Compliance Specialist  
ACO-100  
202-267-3389

----- Forwarded by Kathy Brockman/AWA/FAA on 02/04/2014 03:22 PM -----

**From:** Anthony Garcia/AWP/FAA

AWP-620, Safety & Standards

**To:** Kathy Brockman/AWA/FAA@FAA,

**Cc:** Robert Y Lee/AWP/FAA@FAA

**Date:** 02/04/2014 03:02 PM

**Subject:** Status Report Regarding the Establishment of Skydiving at Watsonville

---

Kathy

The following is the status report I received from the SFO-ADO Compliance Specialist regarding the establishment of skydiving at Watsonville Airport.

SFO-ADO Compliance Specialist spoke with Mr. Rayvon Williams, airport manager, on 2/4/14 regarding the status of the establishment of the skydiving operation at Watsonville Airport.

Mr. Williams supports establishing the skydiving activity at his airport, so currently; there is no intent to prevent skydiving at the airport by the sponsor.

Both the skydiving operator and the airport manager are working together to make skydiving happen at the airport. Mr. Williams believes progress is being made for skydiving to take place at the airport (please see responses below).

The establishment of skydiving at the Watsonville Airport is not being delayed by the ALP update. The approval of the ALP is progressing as anticipated.

The ALP showing the parachute landing zone has been air spaced and is up for the ADO's approval. Mr. Williams is aware of the status that the ALP will be approved very soon.

The parachute proponent is working with Mr. Williams to obtain categorical

exclusions from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and the US Fish and Wildlife Service for skydiving to take place at the airport.

The FAA has no further action regarding the fish and wildlife actions.. Mr. Williams said that he and the skydiving operator also anticipate these environmental agencies will provide the CATEXs very soon. So progress is being made on the environmental issues as well.

We don't have an ETA for the final determination and approval, but the parties are working towards the establishment of skydiving at Watsonville. It is not being prevented by unreasonable restrictions or impediments.

-----@--(' ')--@-----  
Tony Garcia  
FAA Airports Division  
Western-Pacific Region  
Los Angeles CA

\_\_\_\_\_|\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_\\_\_\_\_\_(\*)\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_  
o/ \o

----- End of Forwarded Message

## Samantha Haschert

---

**From:** volker [volker@skydivesurfcity.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 05, 2014 4:46 PM  
**To:** Samantha Haschert  
**Subject:** Fwd: Re: Watsonville Airport - Environmental followup items from ACIP meeting + update on Parachute Landing Zone.

Hello Samantha,

please find attached an email that was forwarded to me for the FAA's Airport District Office (ADO) It outlines the next steps.

Thanks

Volker

### **Additional item not discussed at ACIP meeting.**

**Item 3, Airport Parachute Drop Zone. Environmental Status.** The proposed Parachute Landing Zone on the Watsonville Airport Layout Plan that is currently being prepared will need environmental evaluation prior to use. Once the Watsonville ALP has been approved by the FAA, the City can then submit an Extraordinary Circumstances Information Submittal (CATEX) for the establishment of the Parachute Landing Zone for FAA review so the FAA determine whether the project qualifies for a Categorical Exclusion from detailed evaluation under the National Environmental Policy Act. We have received your letter of August 23, 2013 and "Background Information Submittal" regarding the Parachute Landing Zone at Watsonville Airport, but as it is not an Extraordinary Circumstances Information Submittal the FAA will not review it in detail or make comments on it.

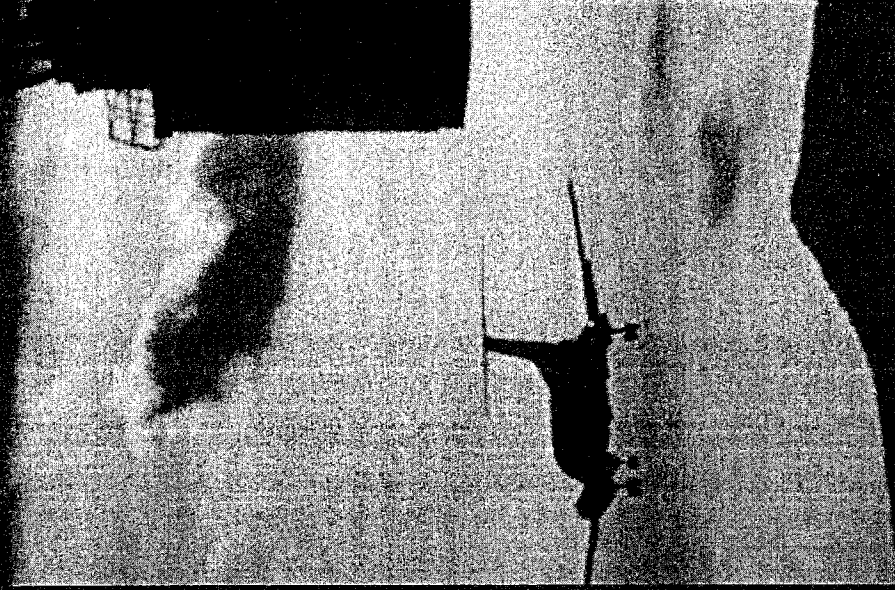
Hopefully this followup e-mail keeps us both up to speed on the next submittals. Please advise me if you have questions regarding this e-mail, or think that I should have something for review that I did not mention. Thanks.

Doug Pomeroy, Environmental Protection Specialist  
Federal Aviation Administration  
San Francisco Airports District Office  
1000 Marina Boulevard, Suite 220  
Brisbane, CA 94005-1835  
Telephone 650 - 827 - 7612; FAX 650 - 872 - 1430

# **How to Prepare Your Categorical Exclusion (CATEX) Information and Prepare a Brief Environmental Assessment**



**Federal Aviation  
Administration**



**Presented to: Association of California Airports**

**By: Peter F. Ciesla,  
Environmental Protection Specialist**

**Date: September 21, 2006**

STEP 1: SPONSOR DESCRIBES  
PROPOSED ACTION AND WHY IT IS  
NEEDED

STEP 2: SPONSOR REVIEWS CATEX  
LISTS IN TABLES 6-1 AND 6-2  
TO DETERMINE IF THE PROPOSED  
ACTION IS ON EITHER LIST. IS ACTION  
ON EITHER LIST?

GO TO  
CHART 2:  
STEP 1B.

STEP 3: IF THE ACTION IS LISTED AS A CATEGORICAL  
EXCLUSION, THE SPONSOR REVIEWS EXTRAORDINARY  
CIRCUMSTANCES IN TABLE 6-3 TO DETERMINE IF THE  
ACTION INVOLVES EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES.

STEP 4: SPONSOR PROVIDES INFORMATION REGARDING  
EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES TO THE RESPONSIBLE  
FAA OFFICIAL.

STEP 5: RESPONSIBLE FAA OFFICIAL REVIEWS PROPOSED  
ACTION AND INFORMATION ON EXTRAORDINARY  
CIRCUMSTANCES. DOES OFFICIAL DETERMINE THAT THE ACTION  
CAN BE CATEGORICALLY EXCLUDED?

STEP 6: SPONSOR AND/OR FAA  
PREPARE REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION  
TO COMPLY WITH SPECIAL  
PURPOSE LAWS THAT APPLY  
TO THE PROPOSED ACTION.

STEP 7: FAA CATEGORICALLY  
EXCLUDES ACTION. FAA  
UNCONDITIONALLY APPROVES  
PROPOSED ACTION. RESPONSIBLE FAA  
OFFICIAL SENDS DATED E-MAIL OR  
LETTER TO SPONSOR STATING FAA  
CATEGORICALLY EXCLUDED THE  
ACTION.

STEP 8: SPONSOR MAY UNDERTAKE  
PROPOSED ACTION.

GO TO  
CHART 2,  
STEP 1B.

# CHART 1. CATEGORICAL EXCLUSIONS. CHAPTER 6

# Steps in the CATEx Process

1. Define the proposed action
2. Review if the action is identified is on the CATEx list
3. Sponsor conducts extraordinary circumstances review
4. Provide extraordinary circumstance information to FAA
5. FAA extraordinary circumstances review
6. Comply with any special purpose laws
7. FAA issues a CATEx determination





## Samantha Haschert

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**From:** Jean.Marinovich@comcast.net  
**Sent:** Friday, February 07, 2014 10:05 AM  
**To:** Samantha Haschert  
**Subject:** Application #131132

Ms. Haschert,

I am sending you this email to confirm both our telephone conversation today and my contact information.

I telephoned you this morning to inquire about the status of the review hearing in this pending matter. On August 3, 2013, Ms. Williams stated a review hearing would take place in six months. You indicated that the review hearing was pushed to April due to the two-to-three month winter closure of the skydiving business, which is the subject of my clients' complaint. You indicated that the hearing is now tentatively set for April 4, 2014, although there is a possibility that it might get pushed out to April 18, 2014. You also indicated that you would give all interested parties one week notice of the hearing.

I notified my clients of the tentative hearing date and that they can expect one week's notice. As I mentioned to you on the phone, I plan to attend the hearing on my clients' behalf. As a result, I would appreciate receiving advance written notice of the hearing as well.

Although I gave you my contact information on the phone, and you already have most of it on the letter I filed last summer on my clients' behalf, I thought it might be helpful to have it again in writing. I have included it below.

Thank you for the information you provided today, and (in advance) for the upcoming notice of the hearing.

Regards,

Jean Marinovich  
Attorney at Law  
P.O. Box 2079  
Aptos, CA 95001  
(831) 722-1369  
[jean.marinovich@comcast.net](mailto:jean.marinovich@comcast.net)

February 20, 2014

County of Santa Cruz  
Zoning Administrator  
701 Ocean Street, 4<sup>th</sup> floor  
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Attention: Samantha Haschert  
Subject: Parachute Landings 515 Calabasas Road, Watsonville, CA

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Our names are Warren and Amelia Koenig. We are 90 and 85 years old respectively. We are one house away from 515 Calabasas Road, Watsonville, and we have lived here for 29 years.

We were very happy when we learned that Volker Haag and his family were going to be our neighbors because it is so refreshing to have young people living nearby. Volker cleared an unattractive field of weeds and junk and brought in fresh energy.

We know that as a result of the county hearing last year Skydive Surf City implemented and is enforcing strict noise control procedures. We know that they changed their flight patterns and fly over our house instead of their old route. Because they are so quiet we do not hear them when they fly over so it is only by chance that we glimpse them if we happen to look up. But we love to see the colorful parachutes up in the air. They bring a smile to our faces and make us jealous that we cannot be up there too.

Skydive Surf City is an asset to the community because he provides jobs, and his company brings in tourists who help our economy.

WE believe the County made the right decision, and we really hope that you will allow Volker to continue his operation. They are absolutely wonderful neighbors, and we feel lucky to have them.

Very truly yours,

*Amelia Koenig*  
*Warren Koenig*

Amelia and Warren Koenig  
260 Koenig Road  
Watsonville, CA 95076-0431  
Telephone: (831) 722-8227



## Samantha Haschert

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**From:** Gus Gold [gusgold@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Friday, February 21, 2014 6:30 PM  
**To:** Samantha Haschert  
**Subject:** Continuation of Permit for Parachute Landing Area on 515 Calabasas RD

Dear Zoning Administrator,

My name is Gustave Gold and I live with my family at 520 Calabasas Road, Watsonville. Our home is located virtually across the street from 515 Calabasas where Surfcity's skydiving customers have been landing for the last several months.

We were happy with the County's decision to permit the landing area at 515 Calabasas Road last year. We have enjoyed seeing the colorful parachutes floating down where we've been able to see them during good weather days.

When the landings began we enjoyed hearing the occasional joyful whoops of the jumpers and we kind of miss them now that they have moved their flight paths to the south a little. I also understand that the company has asked their customers to use lower voices as they get closer to the ground. At any rate, we've noticed that there is much less sound associated with the landings anymore.

Another thing we noticed about the new glide path Surfcity is using is that we see less of the jumpers than we used to as they now begin their descent well to our south.

Overall, between the reduced sound and more southerly beginning point, the noise from parachutists is pretty much lost under the louder and more frequent agricultural equipment and low-flying light aircraft coming and going from nearby Watsonville field. We would welcome the continuity of parachute landing activity at 515 Calabasas.

Sincerely,

Gus and Wilma Gold

## Samantha Haschert

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**From:** Lenny and Geri Wolff [wolffden@cruzio.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 26, 2014 10:01 AM  
**To:** Samantha Haschert  
**Subject:** 515 Calabasas rd., Watsonville

County of Santa Cruz Attn: Zoning Administrator & Samantha Haschert  
701 Ocean Street, 4th Floor  
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Subject: Permit for Parachute Landing Area at 515 Calabasas rd., Watsonville

To Whom it May Concern,

My name is Lenny Wolff. I live directly across Calabasas Rd from 515.

I am writing to express my strong support for the application. The people from Skydive Surfcity have been excellent neighbors in every way. I was pleased when I heard last year that the county had decided to issue them a permit so that they could go ahead and operate.

I was told that someone in the past thought that noise from their operation was an issue. My house is within 100 yards of their landing area and I have never felt that noise was a problem. Actually I haven't heard anything at all for the past couple of months. Before that we might hear an occasional parachutist talking as they floated over. We live in a working agricultural area and compared with the noise from farm equipment and crop spraying aircraft, the noise from the skydivers is absolutely insignificant.

Once again, we are strongly in favor of Santa Cruz County granting the permit.

Thank you,  
Lenny Wolff  
514 Calabasas Rd.  
Watsonville, CA

To: County of Santa Cruz Planning Department  
Samantha Haschert/Zoning Administrator

February 28, 2104

Dear Ms Haschert,

I am writing regarding my neighbors, Lisa and Volker and the parachute landings next door. I am aware of the county review hearing in April.

The skydivers have been nothing but respectful. They put up signs to reduce any noise, they have moved the benches for the spectators to give me more privacy and they volunteered to plant a hedge along the fence for the same reason.

I never felt disturbed by them and since they moved their jumps more to the South I barely even notice them.

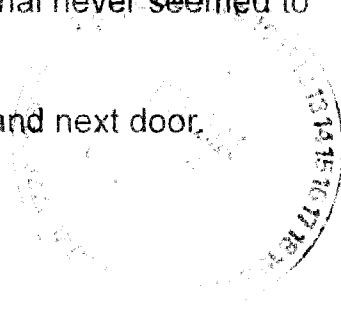
We used to have donkeys, goats, dogs and a horse. These animal never seemed to mind the parachutes landing only a few feet away from them.

This is my 2<sup>nd</sup> letter of support. I hope to see them continue to land next door.

Respectfully,

Jean Favre- 513 Calabasas Road

*Jean Favre*  
*(831) 840-4563*



## Samantha Haschert

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**From:** Kim Sotero [kim@skbookkeeping.com]  
**Sent:** Saturday, March 01, 2014 12:32 PM  
**To:** Samantha Haschert  
**Subject:** Surf City Skydive Parachute Landing Permit

Hi Samantha,

I'm sending you this email because I'm in support of Surf City Skydives Parachute Landing Permit. My home address is 226 Scarlet Ct. Watsonville, Ca 95076. I attended the hearing last year and was in support of the Surf City Skydive landing at 515 Calabasas Rd. We watch them all the time from our property and actually missed seeing them when they took November and December off. Since they started up again in January we have noticed that they're jumping pattern seems to be closer to our property and it seems to be quieter than in the past.

Please put down that my family (children and pets) are in support of the Surf City Skydive business and landing at 515 Calabasas Rd.

Thank you for your time in this matter,

***Kim Sotero***

Certified Bookkeeper

S K Bookkeeping  
P.O. Box 1569  
Aptos, CA 95001  
831-722-3020 Phone  
831-722-3050 Fax

March 3<sup>rd</sup> , 2014

Santa Cruz Planning Department  
Attn: Zoning Administrator  
701 Ocean Street- 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Santa Cruz California 95060

**Letter of support for parachute activity on property 515 Calabasas Rd, Watsonville**

Dear Ms Haschert,

We were at the county hearing last year to show our support for the skydiving operation next door.

We and other neighbors were surprised by some of the false allegations that were made during the hearing. What was said about noise and particularly the parachute flight path was absurd and simply not true. We are the closest neighbors to the landing area and have a perfect view of each and every flight. We never witnessed it and believe that it is in fact not possible, for the parachutes to fly as low, in between the opposing neighbors' houses, as it was claimed during the meeting. They would have to be landing in the trees or bushes down in the ravine to do so.

Issuing a county permit was the right thing to do. We would like to briefly comment on the permit conditions.

Skydive Surfcity's staff has been doing an excellent job managing any noise. For the most part, we don't even hear or notice the jumpers anymore. Many time we only notice them because one of our dogs briefly looks up to the parachutes, right before they are landing. It seem that not even our dogs care about the parachutes anymore. Sounds have been nearly eliminated.

There also have been some changes in the flight track of the parachutes. After the parachutes open, they appear to be flying to the South, circling over the Koenig property, followed by overflying our property (511 Calabasas Road ) and then going straight over to their landing area. We do not understand why there was a need to make any changes but we are happy with whatever they are doing now.

They seem to manage their spectators differently. We used to see them sometimes on the landing area. It was always fun to witness the excitement. They either stopped allowing spectators (which would be sad) or they are not allowing them to walk onto the landing area. Again, we do not see a reason to regulate this.

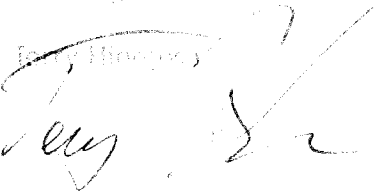
We have been receiving update letters regarding the airport access. We know that Volker is working very hard to get this accomplished.

Overall, we are sad to see that the number of jumps has decreased. This may be due to the bad economy. We hope that things will pick up for them again.

We are still strong supporters of the skydiving operation on Calabasas Road. We hope to see many more parachutes land next door.

Do not hesitate to contact us if you have any further questions.

Best Regards,

  
Jerry Thompson

March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2104

Santa Cruz Planning Department  
Samantha Haschert & Zoning Administrator  
701 Ocean Street  
4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Santa Cruz California 95060

**Letter of support for parachute landings on 515 Calabasas Rd, Watsonville**

Dear Ms. Haschert,

My property on 557 Calabasas Road is one of the Residential Agricultural zoned parcels just west of the parachute landing field.

I understand that there will be a permit review hearing coming up. I am supporting Skydive Surfcity's operation and I am glad that the county issued a permit for the landing area last year.

I noticed that Volker put up signs to remind the jumpers and spectators to keep the noise down. This new system works well.

The spectators are now waiting east of the landing zone. So they are out of my line of sight. Generally, I do not pay attention to the skydivers and I hardly hear or see them anymore.

We are not disturbed by the parachutes nor any associated sounds. There is always something going on in this agricultural area: noise from farm equipment, music from field workers, animal noises, low flying airplanes and helicopters, etc. are much louder than this harmless activity.

I did notice a change in the parachute flight route. They seem to be flying more towards the airport after their parachutes open up. Then they are coming in over Terry Hinojosa's property before they land. This is fine with me. I would not mind if they were over my property. My kids like watching them.

The landings of the parachutes have no negative impact on me or my family.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,



Robert Silva  
557 Calabasas Rd.

758-9123



## **Samantha Haschert**

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**From:** michael foster [mikefo@sbcglobal.net]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 12, 2014 4:39 PM  
**To:** Samantha Haschert  
**Cc:** mikefo@sbcglobal.net  
**Subject:** Parachute Landing Watsonville

**To: County of Santa Cruz Attn: Zoning Administrator & Samantha Haschert**  
**Sj: Parachute Landings Watsonville**  
**Dt: 3/12/14**  
**Fr: Mike Foster**

Dear Samantha,

As a customer of Skydive Surfcity, I wanted to share my thoughts about the company, and the recent experience my entire family had while doing a "family dive."

My wife, Jill, and I (and my 2 kids) were very impressed with our recent Watsonville skydiving adventure. It was very exciting, and we were delighted to see that it was being run by true professionals who were organized, focused on the details, and good neighbors (of the community).

We were advised, on numerous occasions by the staff, that we needed to keep the noise down, especially while landing, or while waiting in the landing zone property. Not only was it posted in the facility, but it was verbally mentioned during training, with a sign in the plane, and again mentioned before we exited the plane. We asked why, and we were informed it was requirement to keep their business operating in the area.

So, I'm writing to simply let you know they're certainly on top of the noise abatement. And, they also run a great program -- might I suggest you, or others looking into this matter, experience their professionalism personally, by taking a jump (or take the whole family like we did)!

If you have any questions about this letter, please don't hesitate to contact me. I'm a big fan of local, small businesses, especially those who abide by the rules, while offering a great service, and a unique tourist attraction for Watsonville.

Best Regards,

Mike

**Mike Foster**  
**161 Cortez Street, Capitola**  
**mikefo@sbcglobal.net**  
**Home: 831-462-5876**

## Samantha Haschert

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**From:** Peter Gelblum [pbgelblum@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 12, 2014 3:35 PM  
**To:** Samantha Haschert  
**Subject:** Skydive Surfcity permit review re landings

Dear Ms. Haschert:

I'm writing regarding the permit review for Skydive Surfcity.

I'm an attorney who works and lives in Boulder Creek. For my last three February birthdays, including 2014 (my 62nd birthday), I have gone skydiving with Skydive Surfcity. It is an amazing experience that I have encouraged many others to participate in, and, in fact, have so far managed to get 3 other people to come with me, with more lined up for 2015. I LOVE that this experience is available in Santa Cruz County.

The business is exceptionally and professionally well run. I wouldn't have gone back otherwise, because I'm not crazy and don't like to take physical risks.

This year, I noticed for the first time repeated warnings not to make noise once the parachute opens, out of deference to people on the ground. I asked about it, and was amazed to learn that people on the ground could hear us talking so far up in the air, but the employee to whom I was attached in the tandem jump assured me that they could. Among other places, there were big, impossible to ignore signs in the building and on the plane. I was reminded of it during the jump, and, of course, abided by the instruction. (None of this inhibited the fun and adrenaline-rush of the jump.) Of course, the plane itself did not fly over any houses at low altitudes on the way up (I wasn't in the plane on the way down).

In sum, I hope that the County does what it can to make sure that this wonderful, unique, valuable, and well-run business continues to offer this great service to County residents.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Peter Gelblum  
831-703-4370

## Samantha Haschert

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**From:** volker [volker@skydivesurfcity.com]  
**Sent:** Friday, March 21, 2014 12:22 PM  
**To:** Samantha Haschert  
**Subject:** Update letter and neighbor response  
**Attachments:** 3rd\_letter.pdf

Hello Samantha,

My neighbor Nancy Stinnett came over to my property today to discuss an issue unrelated to the parachute landing permit today.

While she was here I handed her the 3rd neighbor update letter that is being sent out to the addresses you provided. Nancy really appreciates getting the letters. She commented that she had noticed and appreciates that we have moved our flight path further to the South and away from the pond.

Feel free to contact her if you have any questions. We are excited that our our efforts do get noticed by the neighbors.

I have attached the 3rd neighbor update letter.

Best Regards

Volker  
831.331.9150

To:

The County of Santa Cruz

Zoning Administrator/Samantha Haschert

Subject: Calabasas Road Skydiving

From:

Dawnalene Davis

760 Calabasas Rd

Watsonville, CA 95076

I was so glad to hear that you granted a permit to the people who are skydiving out near my home. I frequently see them coming down and it always makes me smile to know that they are able to offer something like that here in our community. I have never noticed any unwelcome noise, and I love to point them out to my Grandchildren.

My household and I are in total support of this activity and hope they can continue to operate here for many years to come.

Thank You,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dawnalene Davis".

Dawnalene Davis

EXHIBIT K