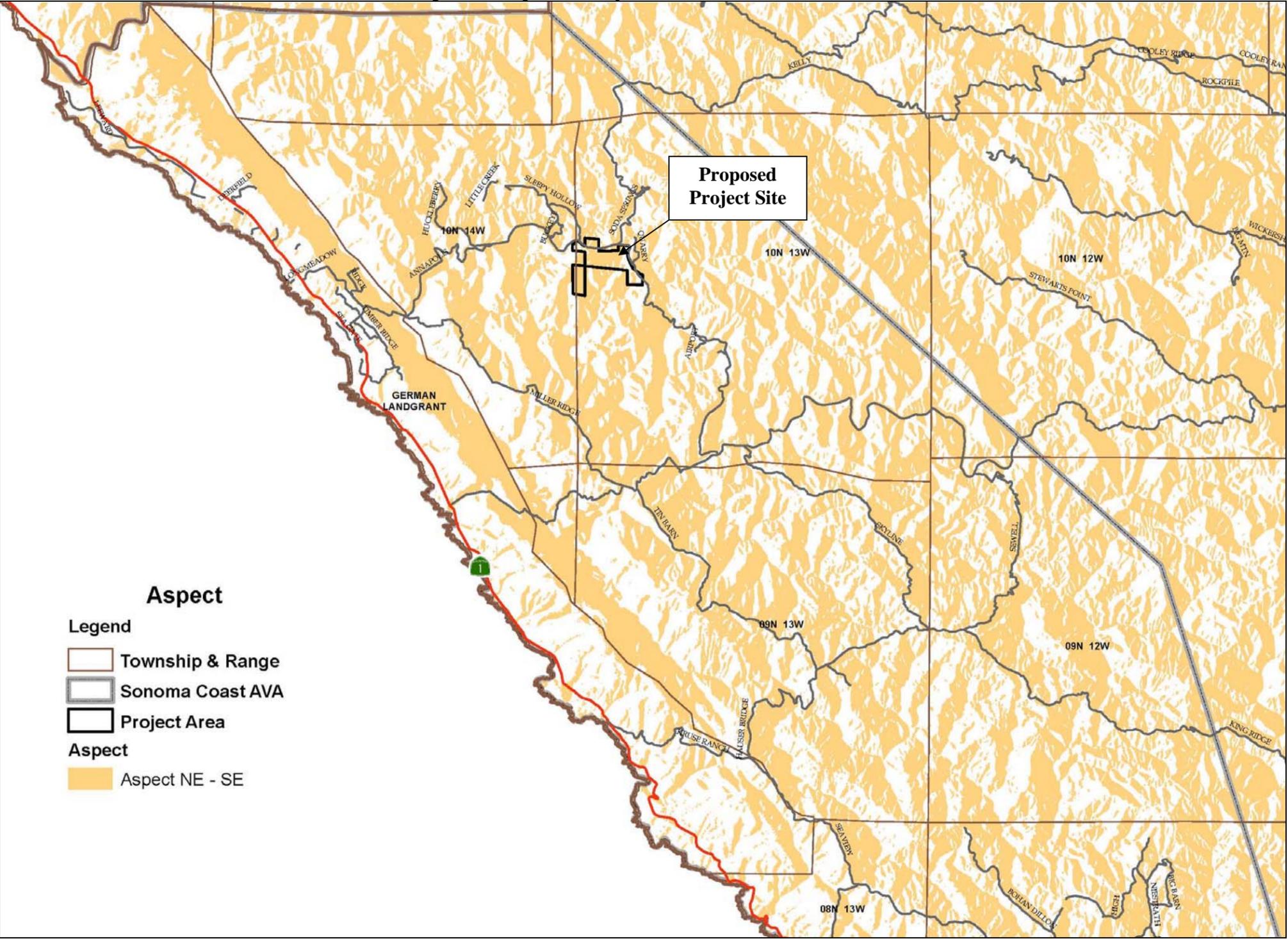


Figure 6-4
Solar Aspect in Project Vicinity – Considerations for Offsite Alternative



As can be seen in Figure 6-5, Potential High Value Sites, large acreages that include three or more of the project site characteristics are quite rare. Requiring an offsite location to include all four resource areas would even further reduce potential offsite locations. In addition, a review of aerial photographs and vineyard proposals indicates that several of the areas indicated on Figure 6-5 as potential high value alternative sites are either currently in vineyard production, proposed for vineyard production, approved for vineyard production or identified as managed timberland. Furthermore, as the willingness of the owners of such lands to sell to the project applicant is not known, acquiring the parcels may not in fact be possible. However, as there are lands with similar characteristics that as yet have not been developed with a vineyard, the possibility of locating the proposed project at another location exists. As can be seen in Figure 6-5, the alternative site would likely be located in the area surrounding Annapolis, or south of the town along Annapolis Road.

Land Use

Because the Offsite Alternative would include the conversion of timberland to vineyards, and would differ only from the proposed project in the location of the conversion area, the Alternative would result in similar land use impacts to the project site. Virtually all of the Gualala Basin Planning Area, including the project site and likely offsite alternatives, is designated Resources and Rural Development. Because the proposed project would be consistent with CDF regulations and policies and the Sonoma County General Plan land use designation and goals and policies, and because the proposed project would be consistent with surrounding land uses, the Alternative would also be consistent and would not result in any conflicts associated with land use.

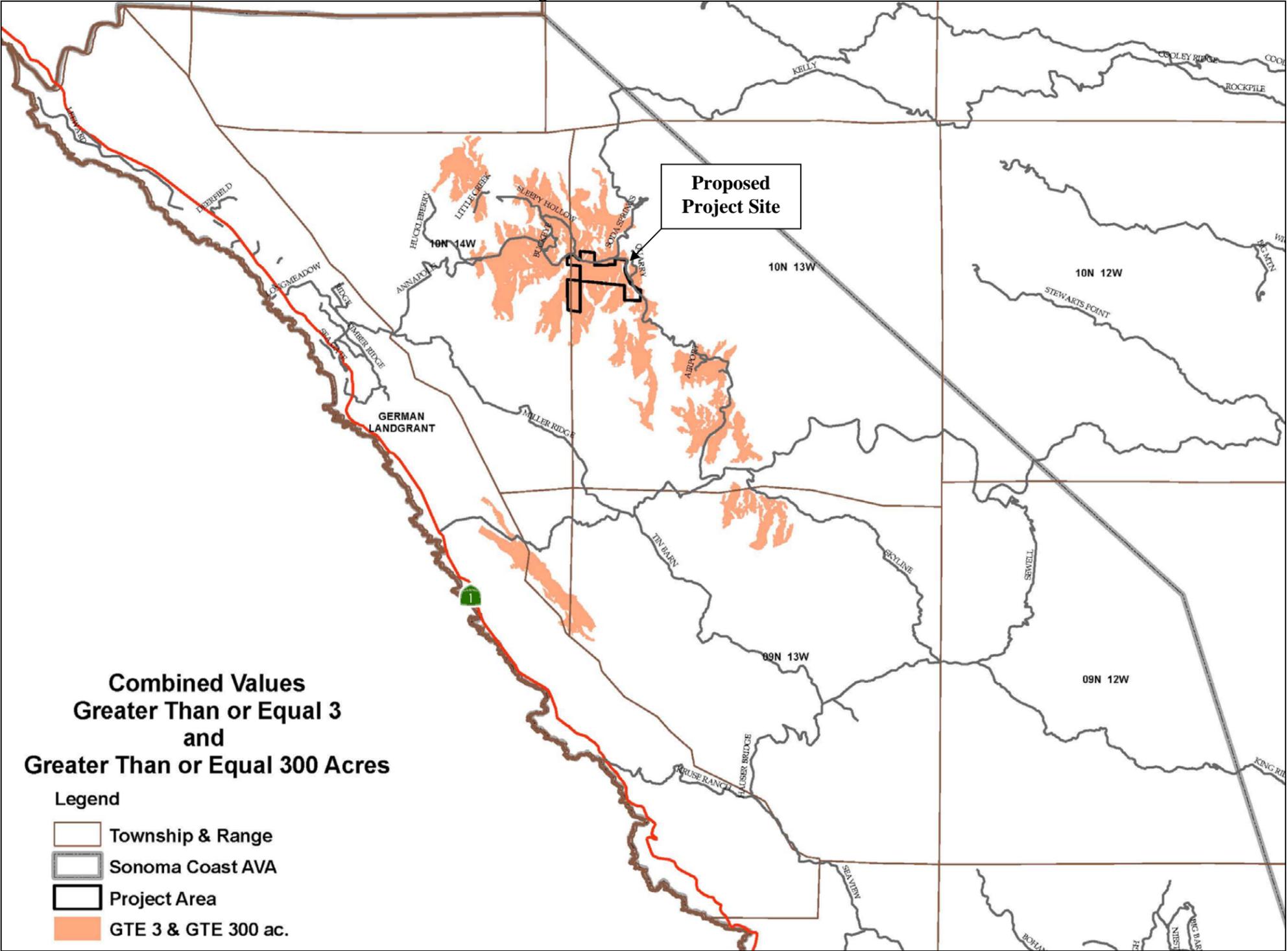
Air Quality

Like the proposed project, the Offsite Alternative would include the conversion of timberland to vineyards. The primary difference between the Alternative and the proposed project is the location of the conversion area. Therefore, the Alternative would result in similar impacts to air quality from timberland conversion, construction operations, and truck traffic associated with timber harvesting and vineyard construction and harvesting.

Biological Resources

The Offsite Alternative, similar to the proposed project, would involve timberland conversion to vineyards. However, the offsite location would likely not have onsite populations of *Horkelia tenuiloba* and the unique manzanita population. Therefore, impacts to *Horkelia* and manzanita would be reduced. Alternate project sites would potentially harbor other protected species and, without conducting site-specific surveys of the Offsite Alternative, determining impacts to biological resources with any certainty is not possible.

Figure 6-5
Potential High Value Sites for Offsite Alternative



Because the Offsite Alternative could effectively avoid impacts to the known onsite *Horkelia tenuiloba* populations and unique manzanita, the Alternative could result in fewer impacts to known biological resources as compared to the proposed project.

Cultural Resources

The proposed project site has several known archaeological sites. While mitigation has been included to reduce impacts, the Offsite Alternative would avoid the onsite resources completely. However, given the likely occurrence of other archaeological resources on the offsite locations, cultural resource impacts would be expected to be similar.

Hazards

The proposed project site contains an old mill site that is considered a potential hazard. The Offsite Alternative would avoid impacts to the mill; therefore, impacts related to existing hazards would be reduced. Total vineyard acreage would be similar; therefore, the low volume of pesticide use would remain the same. As with the proposed project, impacts related to pesticide use would not be adverse due to the use of Integrated Pest Management practices. However, similar to the proposed project, should an accidental spill of hazardous chemicals occur, the Alternative would have a potentially significant impact. Overall, the Offsite Alternative could reduce the hazards-related impacts as compared to the proposed project.

Hydrology and Water Quality

The Offsite Alternative would include similar mitigation to ensure that short-term construction and long-term operational sedimentation does not occur. However, site-specific characteristics that allow for the capture of overland sheet flow for irrigation may not be present at an alternate location. As a result, alternate sources of water may be required; which could lead to additional impacts. Furthermore, as discussed in Chapter 3.7, the proposed project would reduce sedimentation by eliminating existing problematic erosion sources onsite. If such erosion areas do not exist on the Offsite Location, a reduction in sedimentation through project design (e.g. BMPs) may not be possible. Therefore, the Offsite Alternative could result in slightly increased impacts to Hydrology and Water Quality.

Geology

Similar to the proposed project, the Offsite Alternative would involve timber harvest and site grading. Because the Alternative would generally include the same components as the proposed project, including structures and infrastructure, the seismic-related impacts would be similar for the Alternative and the project. Therefore, geological impacts would be similar for the Offsite Alternative and the Proposed Project.

Transportation and Circulation

Like the proposed project, the Offsite Alternative would include the conversion of timberland to vineyards. The primary difference between the Alternative and the proposed project would be the location of the conversion area. Therefore, like the proposed project the Offsite Alternative would be unlikely to result in substantial adverse effects associated with transportation and circulation due to the low trip generation. Overall, impacts would be similar to the proposed project.

Noise

Because the Offsite Alternative would be located at another location the possibility exists that nearby residences would not experience noise impacts. Locating the site further outside of Annapolis would reduce the likelihood of having neighbors proximal to the project site. Therefore, impacts related to noise could be reduced by locating the project site in a more remote location.

Aesthetics

Similar to the proposed project, the Offsite Alternative would include the conversion of timberland to vineyards. The offsite location would be on similar slopes and would likely remain visible to local roadways. However, locating the site further outside of Annapolis would reduce the likelihood of having neighbors proximal to the project site. Therefore, impacts related to aesthetics could be reduced by locating the project site in a more remote location.

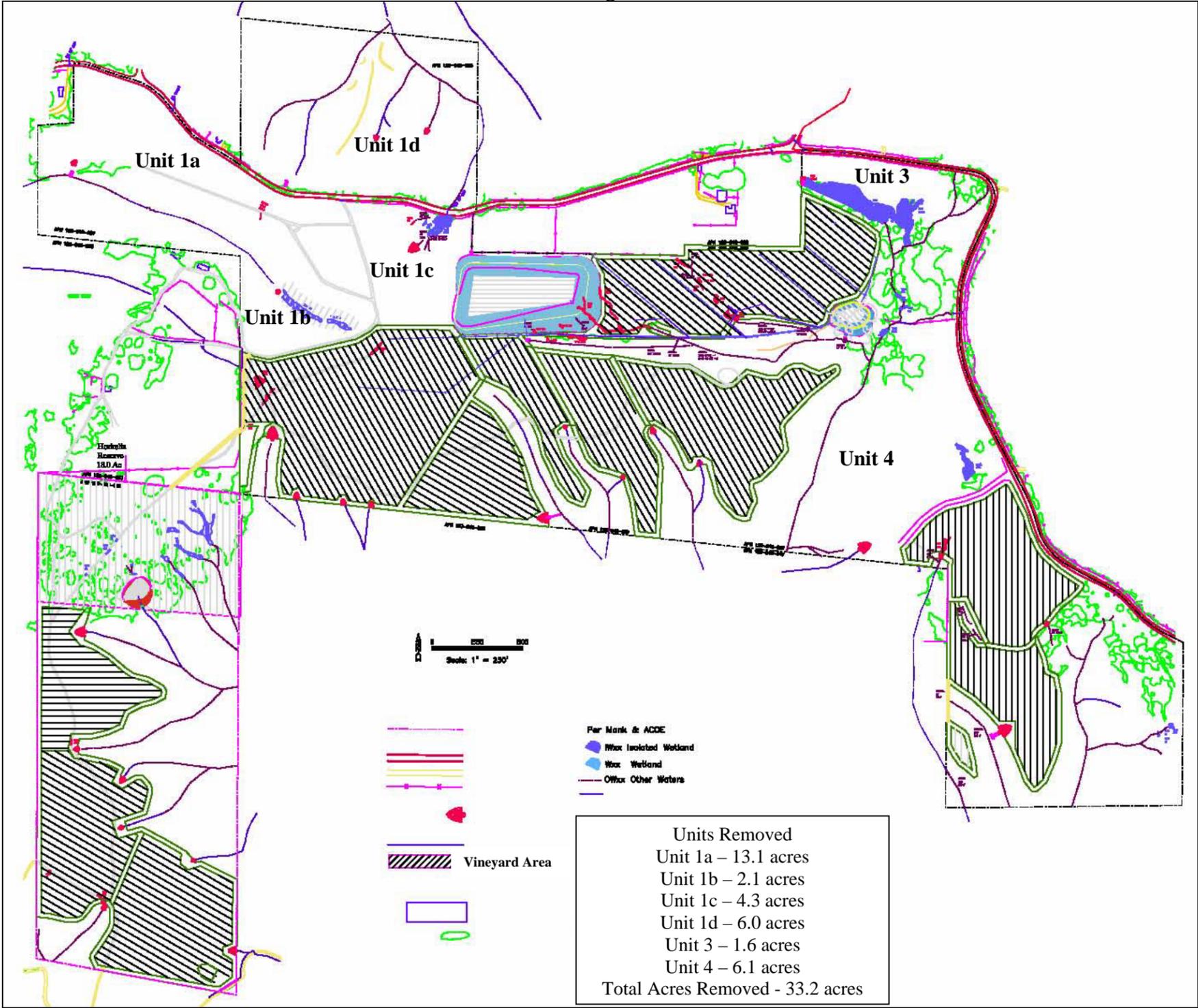
Reduced Acreage Alternative

Similar to the proposed project, the Reduced Acreage Alternative would include the conversion of timberland to vineyards (See Figure 6-6). However, the Reduced Acreage Alternative would strategically reduce project acreages in three areas to reduce impacts to adjoining properties and on-site biological resources. While the proposed project would establish reserves for biological and cultural resources, the Reduced Acreage Alternative would expand the reserves around the resources by eliminating certain vineyard units; thereby maintaining these sites in their natural state. The Reduced Acreage Alternative would reduce the overall vineyard area by 33.2 acres (24.6 percent) by eliminating Unit Areas 1(a-d), 3, and 4. Unit 1 forms the northwest corner of the proposed project, Unit 3 is located in the northeast corner of the project site, and Unit 4 is located in close proximity to the archaeological sites and manzanita preserves.

Land Use

Because the Reduced Acreage Alternative would include the conversion of timberland to vineyards, and differs only from the proposed project in size of the conversion area, the Alternative would result in similar land use impacts to the proposed project.

**Figure 6-6
 Reduced Acreage Alternative**



As the proposed project would be consistent with CDF regulations and policies, the Reduced Acreage Alternative would also be consistent with CDF regulations and policies. Furthermore, the proposed project would be consistent with the Sonoma County General Plan land use designation for the site, as well as General Plan goals and policies, similar to the proposed project. The Alternative would also not result in any compatibility conflicts associated with adjacent land uses. Overall, the Alternative would have similar land use impacts as the proposed project.

Air Quality

Like the proposed project, the Reduced Acreage Alternative would include the conversion of timberland to vineyards. The primary difference between the Alternative and the proposed project is the size of the conversion area. Therefore, the Alternative, due to the smaller conversion area, may result in slightly fewer short-term emissions associated with timber harvesting activities. This would include generation of fugitive dust associated with initial grading activities for vineyard unit preparation. In addition, due to the smaller vineyard area, fewer vehicle exhaust emissions would be generated during construction. Furthermore, the reduced number of workers needed to harvest the grapes, and trucks needed to transport the grapes, would slightly reduce the air quality impacts associated the proposed project. As a result, the Reduced Acreage Alternative would reduce impacts to air quality as compared to the proposed project.

Biological Resources

The Reduced Acreage Alternative, similar to the proposed project, would involve timberland conversion to vineyards. However, the conversion area for the Alternative would be reduced to expand the buffer to the *Horkelia tenuiloba* populations and the unique manzanita populations on the project site. Yet, the reduced conversion area of the Alternative would not be anticipated to substantially reduce potential impacts to special-status wildlife species. However, because the Reduced Acreage Alternative would reduce the total disturbed area, the Alternative would result in fewer impacts to biological resources than the proposed project.

Cultural Resources

Known prehistoric resources would be avoided under both the proposed project and the Reduced Acreage Alternative. However, due to the reduced conversion area, fewer impacts would occur to any unidentified cultural resources occurring in those areas. Furthermore, the Reduced Acreage Alternative would expand the buffer areas surrounding the preserved areas. As a result, by reducing the total disturbed area, the Alternative would reduce the possibility of disturbing cultural resources.

Hazards

The old mill site is located within Unit 4; therefore, demolition of the old mill and grading of the old mill site would not occur under the Alternative. Furthermore, by

reducing the total acreage, the Alternative would reduce vineyard plantings, which would reduce the volume of pesticide use. However, it should be noted that the proposed project would result in a less-than-significant impact from pesticides. Overall, the Reduced Acreage Alternative would reduce the hazards-related impacts as compared to the proposed project.

Hydrology and Water Quality

The Reduced Acreage Alternative would result in a reduction of the conversion area by approximately 24.6 percent, primarily on the northwestern and southeastern portions of the project site. This would not be expected to further reduce soil loss during construction and operation phases as compared to the Proposed Project, because this Draft EIR determined that the Project would not result in increased sedimentation during the construction and operation of the project due to the design of the project as well as required mitigation. In addition, changes to peak and summer time flows would be reduced because of the reduced conversion area. However, as outlined in Chapter 3.7, the proposed project is anticipated to increase summer base flows, which is considered a hydrologic benefit. Reduction in net sedimentation would occur under both the proposed project and the Reduced Acreage Alternative via implementation of sediment catch basins and gully protection measures. Overall, the Reduced Acreage Alternative would be anticipated to result in similar or slightly increased hydrologic and erosion impacts as compared to the Proposed Project.

Geology

Similar to the proposed project, the Reduced Acreage Alternative would involve timber harvest and site grading, although the acreage of the conversion area would be less than the proposed project. Because the Alternative would generally include the same components as the proposed project, including structures and infrastructure, the seismic-related impacts would be similar between the Alternative and the project. Therefore, geological impacts are similar for the Reduced Acreage Alternative and the Proposed Project.

Transportation and Circulation

Like the proposed project, the Reduced Acreage Alternative would include the conversion of timberland to vineyards. The primary difference between the Alternative and the proposed project is the size of the conversion area. Therefore, similar to the proposed project, the Reduced Acreage Alternative would not result in substantial adverse effects associated with transportation and circulation. However, the reduction in vineyard acreage would reduce the number of workers and trucks needed to harvest the grapes. As a result, impacts to Transportation and Circulation would be slightly reduced under the Reduced Acreage Alternative.

Noise

The Reduced Acreage Alternative would eliminate Unit 1(a-d), which is located in the northwest corner of the project site, adjacent to the majority of the nearby residences. In addition, Unit 3 would be eliminated which is located in the northeast corner of the project site, and is the area closest to the Starcross Monastery. Therefore, noise impacts to those areas would be reduced. However, the Alternative would still result in the conversion of timberland to vineyards, and differs only from the proposed project in size of the conversion area. Therefore, the Alternative would still result in noise impacts, including short-term noise impacts associated with timber harvesting activities, as well as long-term noise impacts associated with vineyard operation.

Aesthetics

Similar to the proposed project, the Reduced Acreage Alternative would include the conversion of timberland to vineyards. However, the Alternative would reduce the total net plantable vineyard area by 24.6 percent, which would reduce aesthetic impacts as compared to the proposed project. In particular, the reduction would include all of Unit 1(a-d), which is adjacent to the majority of the nearby residences, and includes a wooded area north of Annapolis Road. Furthermore, Unit 3 would not be converted, which would expand the visual buffer for both Starcross Monastery and Annapolis Road. Therefore, the Alternative would be expected to result in reduced Aesthetic impacts for the majority of nearby residences.

Environmentally Superior Alternative

In addition to the discussion and comparison of impacts of the alternatives to the proposed project, CEQA requires that an "environmentally superior" alternative be selected and the reasons for such selection disclosed. In general, the environmentally superior alternative is the alternative that would be expected to generate the least adverse impacts. CEQA requires that if the No Project Alternative is the environmentally superior alternative, the EIR must identify an additional alternative that is environmentally superior [CEQA §15126.6 (e)(2)].

While the environmentally superior alternative must reduce the overall impact of the proposed project, it should be noted that the Draft EIR determined that all project impacts could be reduced to a less-than-significant level with the implementation of the mitigation measures required in the Draft EIR. Therefore, the alternatives considered in this analysis have been designed to reduce the intensity of impacts identified for the proposed project.

For this project, the environmentally superior alternative would result in development of the site under the Reduced Acreage Alternative. Transportation and Circulation impacts would be reduced because fewer workers and trucks would be required to harvest the grapes; therefore, fewer vehicle trips would be made, thereby resulting in reduced Traffic, Air Quality, and Noise impacts. In addition, the reduction in acreage would

reduce the total area disturbed, thereby reducing impacts to Aesthetics, Hazards, Biological Resources, and Cultural Resources.

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