

**COUNTY OF SAN MATEO
PLANNING AND BUILDING DEPARTMENT**

DATE: October 21, 2024

TO: Agricultural Advisory Committee

FROM: Tiffany Gee, Planning Staff, 650/383-4326

SUBJECT: Consideration of an Agritourism Event starting on November 22, 2024, and ending on January 5, 2025, located at 78 Pilarcitos Creek Road, unincorporated Half Moon Bay (Santa's Tree Farm).

County File Number: PLN2024-00263 (Sare)

PROPOSAL

The applicants, Daniel and Natalie Sare, have applied for an Agritourism Event for the upcoming 2024 winter holiday tree season, November 22, 2024 – January 5, 2025, located at 78 Pilarcitos Creek Road, unincorporated Half Moon Bay (Santa's Tree Farm). The proposed days and hours of operation are as follows: Daily from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The proposed Event elements are: 1) Christmas tree sales, a train ride (rubber tires) with a route consisting of an existing rural field access road (same route as previous years), agricultural education farm tours and stories, and 2) a pre-packaged food/snack bar (less than 25 sq. ft.) with seasonal and Christmas related item sales.

Parking for the Event will occur alongside the tree farm fields. There will be 3-4 employees on the site. Temporary signage meeting the Agricultural Event signage requirements, as provided in past years, will be erected for the seasonal operation.

DECISION MAKER

Director of Planning and Building

QUESTIONS FOR THE AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

1. Is the agritourism use compatible with the long-term agricultural uses of the land?
2. Will the agritourism operation have any adverse effect on surrounding agricultural uses? If so, can any conditions of approval be recommended to minimize any such impact?
3. What decision do you recommend the Director of Planning and Building take with respect to this application?

BACKGROUND

Report Prepared By: Tiffany Gee, Project Planner

Owner/Applicant: Daniel Sare and Natalie Sare

Location: Santa's Tree Farm, 78 Pilarcitos Creek Road, unincorporated Half Moon Bay

APN: Portion of 056-380-110 (formerly 056-380-020 and portion of 056-380-060)

Parcel Size: 160 acres

Existing Zoning: Planned Agriculture District/Coastal Development (PAD/CD)

General Plan Designation: Agriculture

Local Coastal Plan Designation: Agriculture

Williamson Act: N/A

Existing Land Use: Agriculture and Residential, including Christmas tree production, barns, and residence.

Water Supply: Private well.

Sewage Disposal: Private septic system.

Flood Zone: Flood Zone A (1% annual chance of flooding) and Flood Zone X (Area of Minimal Flooding), pursuant to Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Flood Insurance Rate Map, Community Panel 06081C0260E, effective October 16, 2012, and Community Panel 06081C0145E, effective October 16, 2012.

Environmental Evaluation: Categorically exempt from environmental review pursuant to Section 15304, Class 4, of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, for the minor temporary use of land having negligible or no permanent effects on the environment.

Setting: The subject property is located on the north side of San Mateo Road, also known as California Highway 92, with the Event located approximately one (1) mile north of the highway along Pilarcitos Creek Road. Intervening vegetation and mountains screen the Event location from the highway.

Chronology:

Date

Action

- September 2015 - Application for Agritourism Event permit, PLN2015-00436, approved.
- November 2016 - Application for Agritourism Event permit, PLN2016-00458, approved.
- September 2017 - Application for Agritourism Event permit, PLN2017-00372, approved.
- November 2018 - Application for Agritourism Event permit, PLN2018-00409, approved.
- November 2019 - Application for Agritourism Event permit, PLN2019-00434, recommended for approval by the AAC.
- November 2020 - Application for Agritourism Event permit, PLN2020-00335, approved.
- September 2021 - Application for Agritourism Event permit, PLN2021-00329, recommended for approval by the AAC.
- October 2022 - Application for Agritourism Event permit, PLN2022-00248, recommended for approval by the AAC.
- October 2023 - Application for Agritourism Event permit, PLN2023-00321, recommended for approval by the AAC.
- September 20, 2024 - Subject Agritourism Event permit application submitted, PLN2024-00263.
- October 21, 2024 - Agricultural Advisory Committee meeting scheduled.

Will the project be visible from a public road?

No, the Event site is located approximately one (1) mile north of San Mateo Road/Highway 92, along Pilarcitos Creek Road, with intervening vegetation and mountainous topography that screens visibility of the Event area from San Mateo Road/Highway 92.

Will any habitat or vegetation need to be removed for the project?

No.

Is there prime soil on the project site?

Minimal areas of the parcels contain prime soils, see Attachment B. The Agritourism Event will not occur on prime soils.

DISCUSSION

A. KEY ISSUES

Planning staff has reviewed this application for conformance with the following Agritourism Guidelines and Performance Standards:

1. Temporary Seasonal Agritourism Uses and Activities

- a. *The Agritourism operation will not interfere with agricultural production on or adjacent to the lot.*

The Agritourism Event does not interfere with the agricultural use of the land, which includes the growing of Christmas trees.

- b. *The Agritourism event will not exceed a maximum of 45 consecutive days and will not occur more than two times per year.*

The proposed Agritourism Event is for the November 22, 2024 – January 5, 2025 winter holiday tree season, occurring one time per year.

- c. *The Agritourism event will operate within the guideline’s allowance of Sunday through Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to sunset; no lighting is allowed.*

The event will operate daily from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. No lighting is proposed in association with the Event; therefore, the proposal meets these requirements.

- d. *The Agritourism event will consist of no more than the maximum allowed uses and activities indicated below:*

Maximum Allowed Agritourism Use/Activity	Proposed (Quantity)
Two (2) inflatables ¹ allowed on all lands ²	
One (1) pony ride area ³	
One (1) farm animal petting zoo on all lands	
One (1) hayride on all lands	
One (1) train with rubberized wheels on all lands	1

One (1) food vendor, mobile or on-site, including mobile prepackaged food/snack bar ⁴ , located on all soils	
One (1) prepackaged food/snack bar on non-prime soils ⁴	1
Other recreational/educational activities, see discussion below	1
¹ Inflatables are subject to the standards of the Safe Inflation Operators Training Organization. ² Subject to a 36-foot height limit as set forth in the Planned Agricultural District and Resource Management District Regulations. ³ Confined animal permit or exemption required. ⁴ Environmental Health Permit required.	

Other recreational/educational activities/Additional comments

The Event will include agricultural education farm tours and stories.

2. Performance Standards for Seasonal Agritourism Uses and Activities

- a. *Adequate on-site parking is provided, as designated on the attached site plan, including conformance with applicable provisions from Local Coastal Program Policy 10.22 (Parking) for adequate parking facilities to accommodate the temporary seasonal uses that are appropriate for the site’s size, environmental sensitivity, and amount of land suitable for parking; and that are not visually prominent from public views.*

Approximately 600 vehicles can be accommodated in space alongside the tree farm fields that will be used for Event parking; this area has been used in past years for this annual winter holiday tree season Event at the property. The parking areas are not visible from San Mateo Road/Highway 92. Furthermore, no land modifications are necessary to accommodate parking.

- b. *Any new signage will be temporarily established and maintained throughout the duration of the Agritourism event, as allowed pursuant to Local Coastal Program Policy 8.21 (Commercial Signs), will be simple and easy to read, and will not be brightly illuminated colored, rotating, reflective, blinking, flashing, or moving signs, pennants, or streamers.*

Temporary signage meeting these requirements, as provided in past years, will be erected for the duration of the seasonal operation.

- c. *All Agritourism uses and activities shall meet the current standards for setbacks and buffers from watercourses, including creeks, and/or riparian vegetation.*

Pilarcitos Creek meanders through the property; however, the Event is confined to previously used/disturbed areas only.

- d. *On parcels forty (40) acres or more in size, all agritourism elements shall be clustered and shall consume no more than two (2) gross acres (excludes hayrides or trains with rubberized wheels). Parking is excluded from acreage calculation.*

The proposal meets these requirements as the Event area does not occupy more than two (2) acres.

- e. *The agritourism operation shall not involve any land disturbance, including import of gravel or fill.*

No land disturbance is necessary to accommodate the Event.

3. Recommended Findings for the Agritourism Event

- a. That the agritourism use is compatible with the long-term agricultural uses of the land because the proceeds from the Agritourism Event supports the economic viability of the farm and does not prevent future agricultural uses on the land.
- b. That the agritourism operation will not adversely affect the health or safety of persons in the area and will not be materially detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to agricultural property. Staff has evaluated the Event proposal and finds there will be no negative impacts on the agricultural uses of the land. Staff believes that use of the land for the proposed seasonal Event is a great benefit to the economic sustainability of the farm.
- c. That the agritourism operation is in substantial conformance with the goals set forth in the San Mateo County Agritourism Guidelines. Specifically, that the operation is secondary and supplemental to existing agricultural operation on the land.
- d. That the proposed use and activities comply with all relevant provisions of the General Plan, Local Coastal Program, and Zoning Regulations as discussed throughout this report.

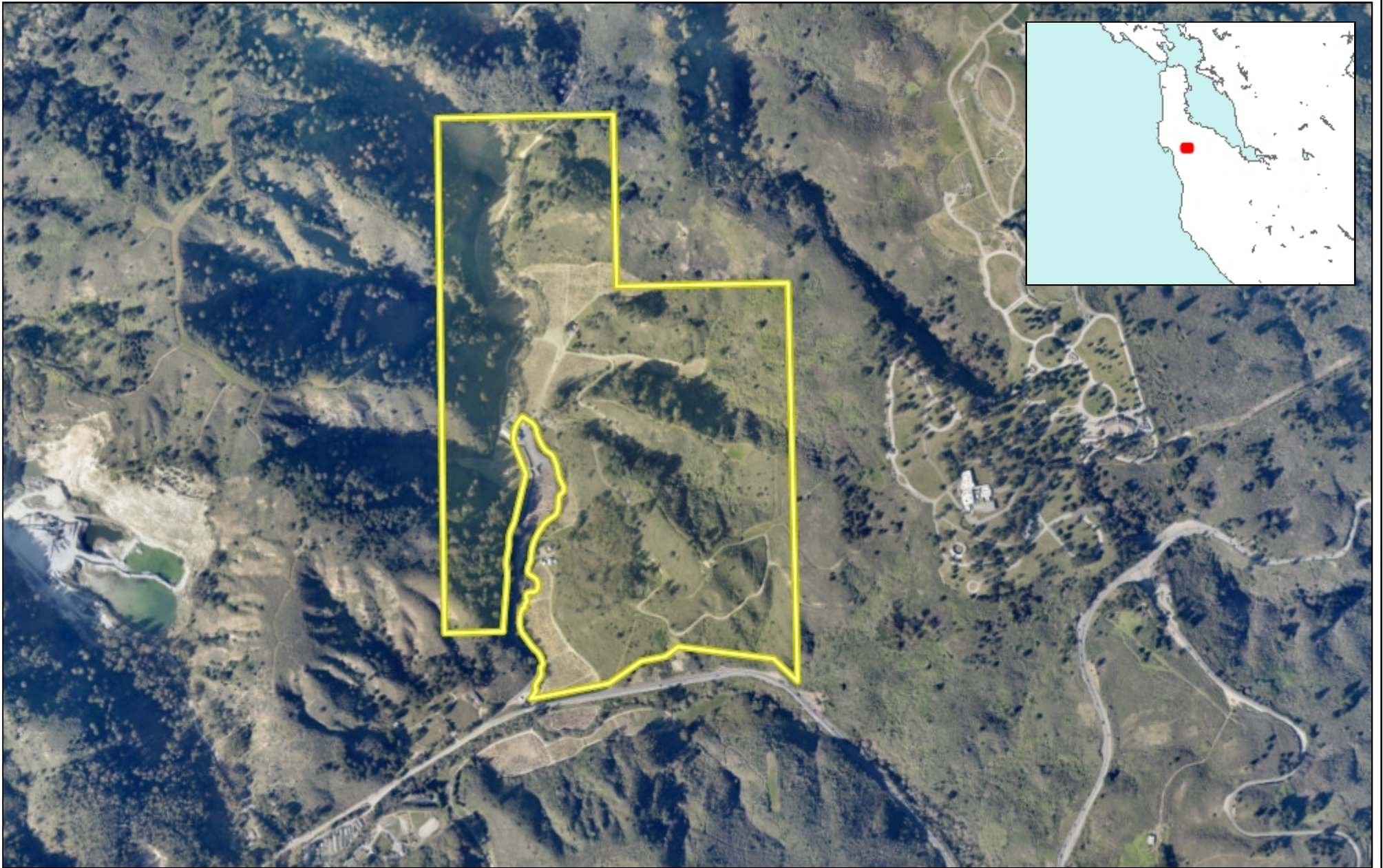
ATTACHMENTS

- A. Location and Vicinity Map
- B. Prime Soils Map
- C. Site Plan
- D. Application



COUNTY OF SAN MATEO - PLANNING AND BUILDING DEPARTMENT

ATTACHMENT A



0.48 0 0.24 0.48 Miles

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1: 15,361



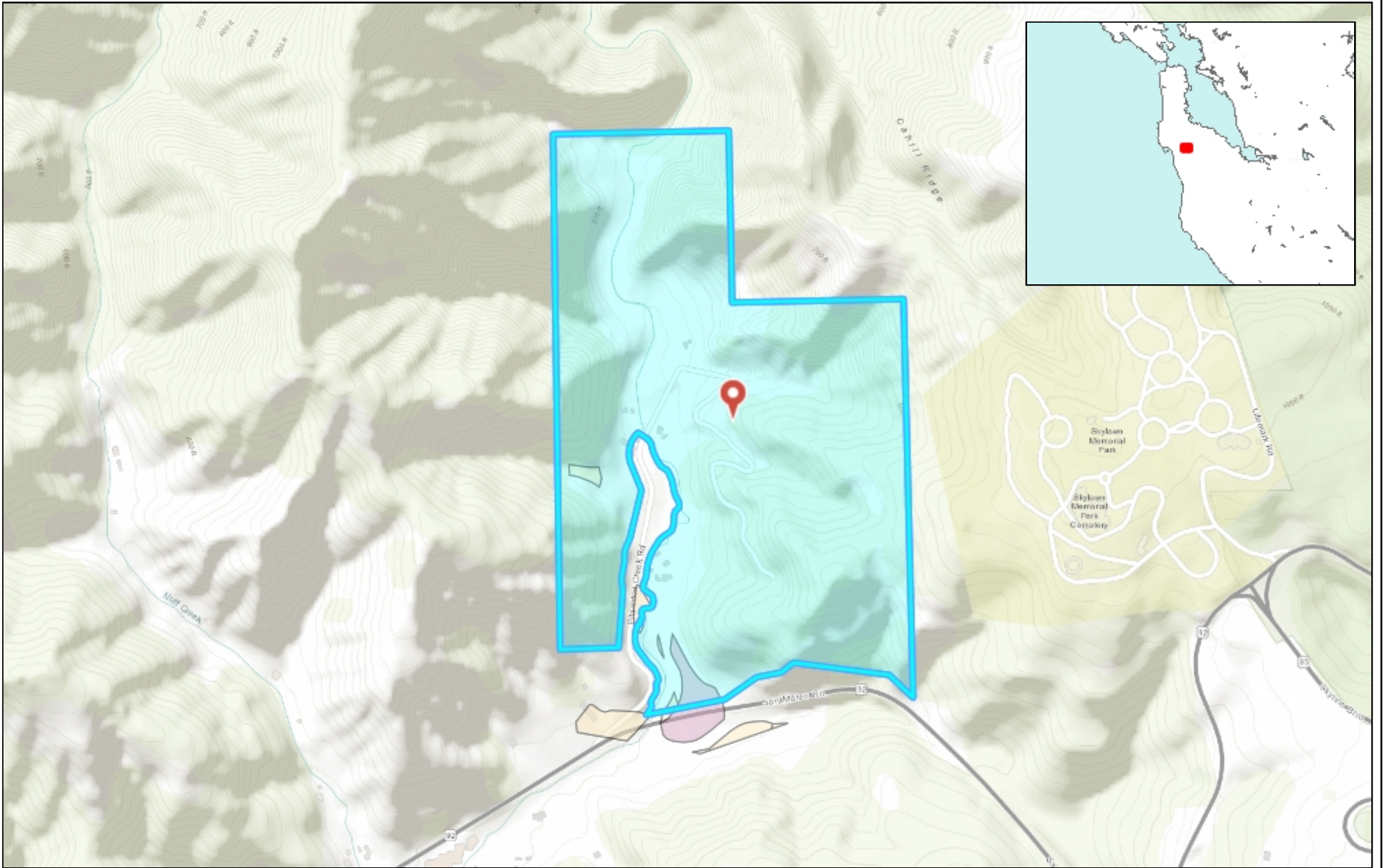
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THIS MAP IS NOT TO BE USED FOR NAVIGATION




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ATTACHMENT B



0.48 0 0.24 0.48 Miles

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1: 15,361 

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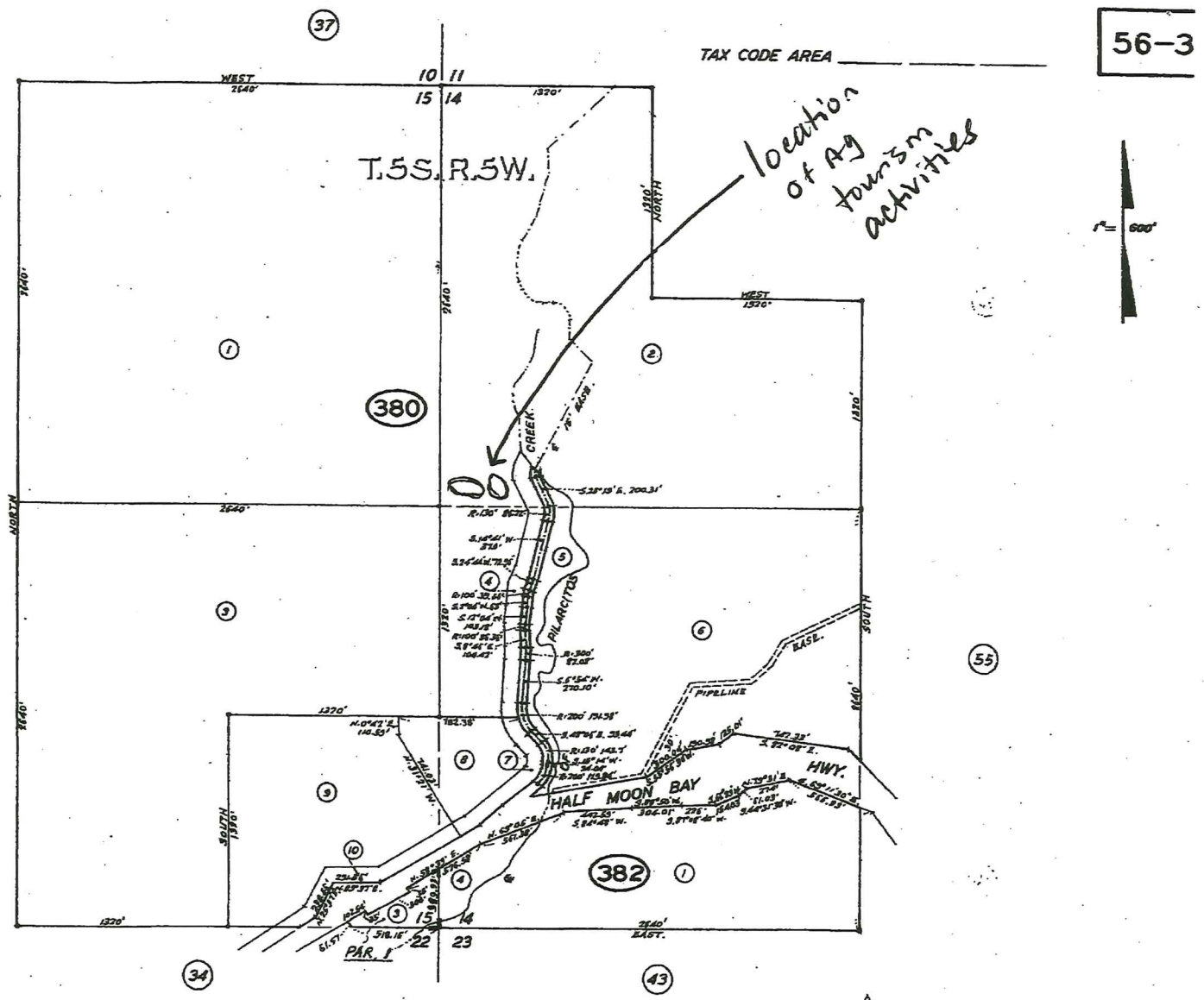


COUNTY OF SAN MATEO - PLANNING AND BUILDING DEPARTMENT

ATTACHMENT C

Site plan 3.

BK-48
35

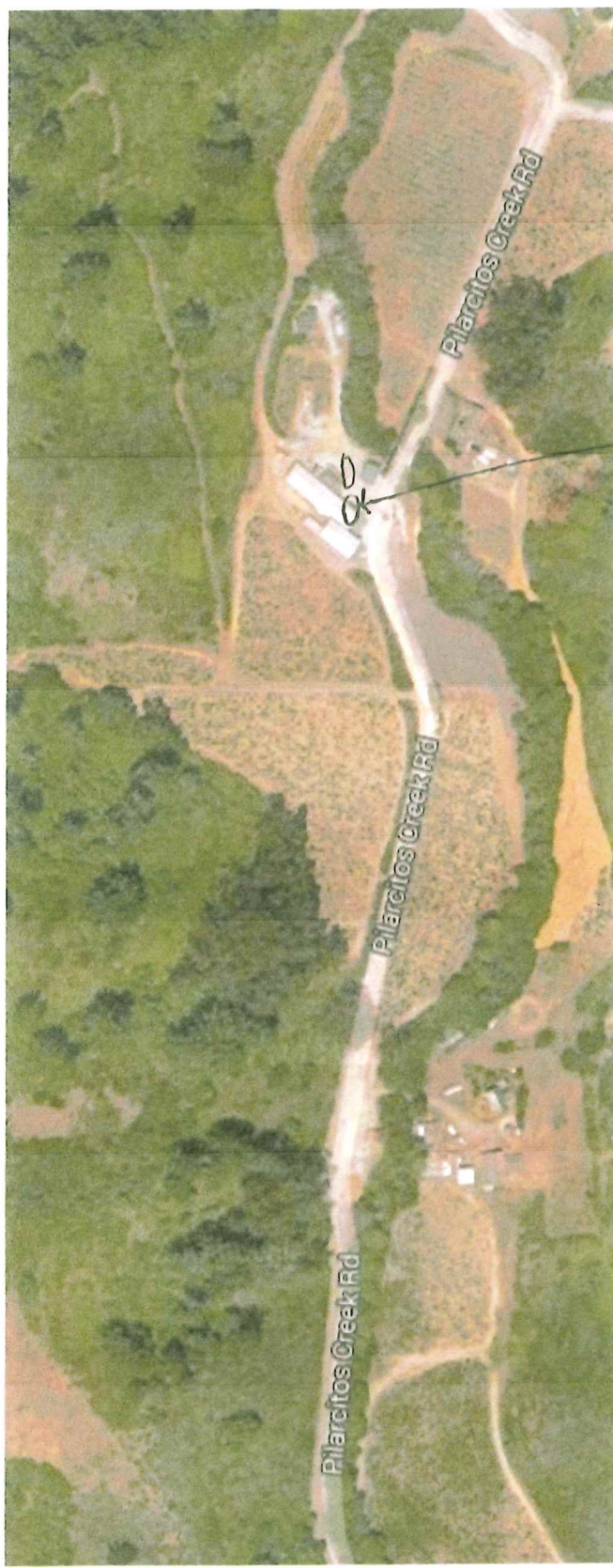


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ASSESSOR'S MAP COUNTY OF SAN MATEO, CALIF.

△ PARCEL MAP VOL 79/37

Site plan 1.



* Per Surco Planning, Summer Burlison: A reminder that APN 056-380-110 is what the ag tourism is on (a portion of that parcel.) It was formerly APN's 056-380-020 and a portion of 056-380-060 but were combined via C.D.C. w/county in COC is included here.

Circles represents location of ag tourism activities 2011.

Same location as all past years.

↓ Highway 92

Site plan 2.



Close up picture of site plan 1.

Circles represents location of ag tourism activities.

Same location as all past years.



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ATTACHMENT D



COUNTY OF SAN MATEO PLANNING AND BUILDING

455 County Center, 2nd Floor, Redwood City, CA 94063 | <https://planning.smcgov.org> | T: 650-363-1825 F: 650-363-4849

Application for Agritourism Event

Primary Permit #: _____

1. Instructions

Please fill out the general Planning Permit Application Form, Environmental Information Form, and this form when applying for an Agritourism use. **Applications must be submitted two months prior to the event.**

2. Project Information

Parcel/Lot Size: _____

160 acres - APN 056-380-110 Per the County.

If less than 40 Acres project not to exceed 1 gross Acre.

If more than 40 Acres project not to exceed 2 gross Acres.

Area less than 2 acres.

Please describe all elements and activities associated with your agritourism activities:

Agritourism activities are temporary seasonal ag use supplemental to year round ag crop.

One train with rubber tires, route consisting of an existing rural field access road, same route as before.

One pre-packaged food/snack bar and seasonal and Christmas related items.

Agricultural education farm tours and ~~stories~~ stories.

Please describe hours, number of employees and statement of conformance with agritourism guidelines:

Agritourism is Nov. 22nd - January 5th, 2024, (45 days) 9am - 5pm.

Agritourism is 3-4 employees.

Prepackaged snack bar is less than 25 SF. This does not interfere with ag production on or adjacent to the area.

No W.A.C., no land disturbance, not in scenic corridor as ag tourism activities are approx 1 mile inland from highway 92 and behind curved hills etc.

Please describe the agricultural uses on the land:

Christmas tree crop production currently and since 1972.

All signage related to ag tourism is only up during ag tourism event time period. Other year round signage is for year round ~~crop~~ crop.

Applicant's Name: _____

Address: Santas Tree Farm

Natalie and Don Sore ~~6000~~

78 Pilarcitos Creek rd

Half Moon Bay, CA 94019

3. Site Description

Please describe any on-site parking areas:

Parking is available alongside/next to Christmas tree fields.

Please describe any on-site eating establishments:

None.

4. Qualification Requirements

Please initial next to the category which qualifies your project for an agritourism use.

NS Event will not occur for more than 45 days. NS Total acreage does not exceed two gross acres.
 _____ Total acreage does not exceed one gross acre. NS Does not interfere with agricultural uses of the land.

5. Williamson Act Contract

Is the parcel currently under a Williamson Act Contract?

YES

NO

If Yes, please provide contract number: _____

6. Materials Required

- a. Three (3) sets of plans that include a scaled site plan, elevations, and floor plans
 - b. One (1) set of reduced plans (8 1/2 "X11" or 11 "X17")
 - c. All applicable applications forms
 - d. Environmental Information Form
 - e. Photographs (if requested)
 - f. Fees as set by Resolution of the Board of Supervisors
- Additional information may be required during review of your application.

7. Approval

Planner: _____

Date: _____

8. Processing

- Fee Collected
- Referral to Agricultural Advisory Committee
- Update Permit Plan

9. Signatures

We hereby certify that the information stated above and on forms, plans and other materials submitted herewith in support of the application is true and correct to the best of our knowledge. It is our responsibility to inform the County of San Mateo through our assigned project planner of any changes to information represented in these submittals.

Owner's Signature (1): *Natalie Sae*

Owner's Signature (2): *[Signature]*

Applicant's Signature: *Natalie Sae [Signature]*