Walt Ranch Vineyard Conversion

The Walt Ranch is a proposed 350-acre vineyard development on 2,300-acre parcel owned by Hall Wines/Hall Brambletree Associates LP (Frisco, TX). The property stretches from near Circle-S Ranch on Atlas Peak over the ridge to the Circle Oaks Community. It lies in the Milliken Creek drainage basin, as defined by the USGS. The public has until November 21 to file comments about this project with the county.

Neighbors who live on Atlas Peak Road and who live in Circle Oaks rely upon ground water and are therefore concerned about the impact of this project on their ability to live here as the project proposes to use 69,000,000 gallons of water annually. They have formed working groups to raise funds to hire attorneys and experts to challenge the EIR.

The Walt Ranch Erosion Control Plan Application (ECPA) #P11-00205-ECPA proposes earthmoving activities on slopes greater than five percent in connection with the development of 356 net acres of vineyard within 507 gross acres on the approximately 2,300-acre Walt Ranch Project (APNs 032-120-028; 032-480-007, -008, -011, -012, -013, -014, -015, -016, -017, -018, -019, -020, -021, -022, -023, -024, -027, -028; 032-490-004, -005, -006, -008, -009, -010, -011, -012, -013, -014, -015, -016, -017, -018, -019, and -020). A total of 65 vineyard blocks are proposed. The draft EIR is available at:

http://www.countyofnapa.org/PBES/WaltRanch/

The Setty family who resides on Atlas Peak wrote a letter to the editor of the Register, which should be read along with the more than 50 comments to it posted on-line:


In 2008 the city of Napa Water Division wrote (6/4/2008) of its concern about the amount of grading which may lead to an increase in the overall delivery of sediment and other pollutants into Milliken Reservoir. There was also a concern about the size of the project and the possible diversion of water that would otherwise normally enter the Milliken watershed.

If there is an increase sediment and nutrients that get in the reservoir from their run-off, it will Create A Public Cost to remove these pollutants—just as vineyard development created a problem and a public cost for the filtration system at Rector Dam.
Aerial view of Walt Ranch showing Circle Oaks in the lower left, the Milliken Dam at top center, above the Silverado Community, the roads in lower right are on the Walt Ranch. Atlas Peak Road can be seen along with Circle-S Ranch in center right. The ridgeline divides the two watersheds: Capell and Milliken. The wells and reservoirs will be in the Milliken Creek watershed.

The following are some of the concerns prepared by citizens of Atlas Peak Road:

- Vineyard will ultimately consume 69 million gallons of water per year. This is equivalent to more than doubling the entire populations in Atlas Peak, Soda Canyon and Circle Oaks; the water used is equal to typical of 600 homes occupied by 3 people each.

- Water will be pumped into storage reservoirs for use because water demand exceeds well pump volume at times such as frost protection. Wells and reservoir are in Milliken Creek watershed/drainage basin (Atlas Peak). If their pumps operate 18 hours/day, pumping will occur for 239 days a year.

- 28,000 trees over 5-inch diameter will be cut in addition to brush. Cuttings will be slashed and burned per EIR, not chipped – is this environmentally friendly? How much carbon dioxide will be released?