



# Friends of the Gualala River

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27 de abril de 2011

<http://www.codorniu.es/contacto.html>

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Estimado Sr. Pages,

Mediante la presente nos complacemos en saludarlos y solicitarles tengan a bien tener en consideración la solicitud que a continuación presentamos.

Nuestra organización, Amigos del Río Gualala del Condado de Sonoma, California, Estados Unidos de Norteamérica, en alianza con las organizaciones del medio ambiente y junto a los ciudadanos que aquí suscribenn, solicitamos respetuosamente al Grupo Codorniu retirar la propuesta del proyecto de viñedos Artesa Napa "Fairfax" de la Cuenca del Río Gualala.

Artesa Napa ha propuesto la tala de 146 acres (59 hectáreas) de bosque de secoyas costeras, para desarrollar nuevos viñedos. Lo anteriormente expuesto, provocará daños permanentes a la cuenca forestal, lugar en el cual habitan salmones en peligro de extinción. Además, cabe señalar que el sitio propuesto para las mencionadas viñas, actualmente se encuentra constituido por bosques y prados con amplia visibilidad desde la carretera principal situada al lado de la zona.

Esta propuesta se originó en el año 2001, época en la cual existían exuberantes expectativas para el lujoso mercado del vino en California. Las circunstancias hoy en día son muy diferentes. El mercado del vino de la zona norte de California está saturado y su valor ha descendido muy por debajo de las altas expectativas del pasado. Muchos viñedos del Condado de Sonoma están a la venta. Las premisas económicas para este proyecto han quedado obsoletas. Para mayor información, sírvanse leer el

documento adjunto, en el cual encontrarán extractos y enlaces que dan cuenta de los principales cambios económicos en la industria vitivinícola de California desde el año 2008.

Tanto nuestra organización como las organizaciones suscritas al presente documento, se oponen a la conversión de los bosques de secoya. Tenemos la convicción que su compañía tiene alternativas reales y rentables para establecer sus proyectos y que no requieren la destrucción permanente de los bosques de secoya, la degradación de las corrientes habitadas por el salmón y la conversión del área a la práctica de agricultura intensamente nociva para el medioambiente. Imaginamos que Codorniu no tiene interés en empañar la excelente reputación en Estados Unidos de su marca Artesa, con publicidad negativa que resalte la atrocidad medioambiental que se producirá a expensas de los bosques de secoya californianos. Las terribles circunstancias en las que se encuentran actualmente estas cuencas, se deben en gran parte a acciones similares a las que ustedes proponen en su proyecto. Sólo el 5% de los bosques de secoya originales permanecen hoy en día, después de sufrir la constante destrucción de la que han sido objeto por más de 100 años. El resto de las tierras forestales, a las cuales pertenece la propiedad Artesa, están luchando por recuperarse del pasado y de la actual ineficiencia de manejo gerencial.

Su supervivencia es clave para restaurar la totalidad del ecosistema con sus variadas y numerosas especies vegetales y animales. El salmón es una de esas especies claves y en peligro de extinción en nuestro río. Como es de su conocimiento, la temporada de pesca comercial de salmón ha sido cancelada en los últimos dos años, después de una severa caída del nivel de población en California. El proyecto Artesa destruirá muchas hectáreas de bosque y será basado en agricultura de monocultivo. Esto sería lo más negativo e inapropiado para un ecosistema en este estado crucial de recuperación. Sugerimos consultar nuestra página web para obtener una lista detallada de los daños medioambientales que son generados de la conversión de tierras forestales.

El proceso de revisión ambiental del estado de California, también ha revelado que el lugar de ubicación de este obsoleto proyecto, contiene recursos de alta significancia arqueológica y cultural del pueblo nativo Americano Pomo y que además posiblemente contenga sepulturas y restos humanos. Cabe destacar que los ancianos pertenecientes a la tribu nativa Kashia Pomo, que aún viven allí, han declarado públicamente que los terrenos en los que se proponen desarrollar viñedos es un lugar bendecido e importante espiritualmente para ellos. Para mayores detalles, refiéranse a la declaración pública adjunta, la cual ha tenido amplia circulación en la bahía de San Francisco. Reiteramos que no creemos que es interés de Codorniu el empañar la reputación de su marca Artesa con público desprecio por los sitios de importancia espiritual para los nativos americanos.

Los problemas inherentes al entorno de la ubicación de "Fairfax" y su diseño, son reflejados por el ritmo extremadamente lento de la obtención de los correspondientes permisos para ejecución, como también a los impredecibles resultados de su análisis medioambiental, los cuales han tomado un tiempo excesivo y sin precedentes hasta ahora - casi 10 años. Además, dada las características señaladas anteriormente relacionadas al alto nivel de controversia pública y a la irregularidad del proceso, creemos que el proyecto es vulnerable a ser objeto de oposición legal y a una creciente publicad adversa.

Recomendamos evitar exponerse a este tipo de riesgos, retirando la propuesta de este proyecto o buscando una ubicación que en términos medioambientales sea adecuada.

De igual forma, recomendamos que se considere la venta o el traspaso de la propiedad a un fideicomiso de tierras o de conservación, con lo cual Codorniu y Artesa brindarán apoyo y liderazgo a la protección del medio ambiente, tanto en términos forestales como también a la conservación y supervivencia de especies.

Atentamente,



Chris Poehlmann

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Independent Coast Observer [news@mendonoma.com](mailto:news@mendonoma.com)

New York Times, Eric Asimov

San Francisco Chronicle [business@sfchronicle.com](mailto:business@sfchronicle.com) [food@sfchronicle.com](mailto:food@sfchronicle.com)

San Francisco Examiner [wharper@sfxaminer.com](mailto:wharper@sfxaminer.com) [newstips@sfxaminer.com](mailto:newstips@sfxaminer.com)

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#### REFERENCES

Santa Rosa Press Democrat, February 10, 2011. **Harvest takes \$142 million toll on North Coast growers**

<http://www.petaluma360.com/article/20110210/BUSINESS/110219952/-1/PT07?p=all&tc=pgall>

excerpts:

Still, the combination of falling grape prices and a smaller harvest in 2010 cost Sonoma County growers \$88.4 million last year, according to a preliminary government report released Thursday.

grape prices continued to decline last year as wineries cut back on production, and instead focused on reducing stockpiles of wine in the face of reduced consumer demand.

“That has a ripple effect through our economy,” said Nick Frey, president of the Sonoma County Winegrape Commission. “It will be felt by local suppliers, lenders and others servicing the grape industry.”

The value of the North Coast grape crop fell to \$902.7 million last year, down from \$1.05 billion in 2009. Sonoma County growers suffered the biggest hit, receiving \$370.5 million for their fruit last year, down from \$458.9 million in 2009.

The bigger concern for North Coast growers is that grape prices continued to decline last year as wineries cut back on production, and instead focused on reducing stockpiles of wine in the face of reduced consumer demand.

### **The lower demand for high-end wine, a result of the recession, sent grape prices tumbling.**

Between 35 percent to 50 percent of Mendocino County grape growers lost money in 2010, and perhaps between 20 percent to 25 percent of those in Sonoma County had losses too, Proctor estimated.

Those widespread losses have some growers wondering if they should farm this year.

“We've got guys from Mendocino calling me and asking if they should even prune their vineyards,” Proctor said. “We ask them how much risk they can take.”

Santa Rosa Press Democrat, October 27, 2010

<http://www.petaluma360.com/article/20101027/ARTICLES/101029530/0/PT07?p=all&tc=pgall>

“The recession has led to a crash in grape prices, which has compounded the misery for growers. Some growers have decided to let their healthy fruit rot rather than sell at the rock-bottom prices being offered by buyers.”

“When the summer did finally warm up, it did so in dramatic fashion with a blast of scorching heat. For two days in August, temperatures spiked well above 100 degrees and entire vineyards were lost.”

Santa Rosa Press Democrat, August 28, 2010

<http://www.petaluma360.com/article/20100828/ARTICLES/100829453/-1/PT07?p=all&tc=pgall>

20 percent: Estimated amount of the 2010 Sonoma County grape crop that remains unsold.

190,000 tons: Predicted yield of this year's crop, about 5 percent below normal.

\$1,000 to \$1,800: Price per ton growers received from buyers in recent weeks; with some varieties netting even lower.

\$2,240: Average price per ton Sonoma County farmers received in 2008. Varieties such as pinot noir fetched an average \$3,170 a ton.

Already growers are comparing the harvest to 1974 and 2000, when grape gluts combined with economic downturns to roil the wine-grape market.

“I've never experienced anything like this,” said Duff Bevill, a veteran grower and founder of Bevill Vineyard Management in Healdsburg. “Everybody likes to compare it to the Depression. It's not, but it's the closest thing to date.”

Growers who managed to find buyers in recent weeks received prices between \$1,000 and \$1,800 a ton — and even lower, depending on the varietal, according to some farmers.

“Some of the growers can't stay in the business at these prices,” said Brian Clements, a wine broker at Turrentine Brokerage in Novato. “The price decline ... has been huge.”

In 2008, Sonoma County farmers got \$2,240 per ton on average, with varietals such as pinot noir fetching an average \$3,170 a ton.

**Santa Rosa Press Democrat, September 9, 2009 - Makers of high-end wines caught in 'dead zone'** [Makers of high-end wines caught in 'dead zone'](#)

...a critical mistake — he assumed California's high-end wine market would continue its inexorable march upward.

He found out how wrong he was last fall, just as his \$100 wines were trying to gain traction in the market. The economy was in free fall, housing prices were plunging and consumers were pulling back sharply, eating out less and shunning luxury goods.

a powerful shake-up under way in the U.S. wine industry. Consumers who for decades have been steadily trading up to higher-priced vintages have reversed course, trading down to cheaper wines in search of better values.

Some think the reversal will be short-lived; others say something has fundamentally changed in the wine business.

“There is permanent shift in the consumer's perception of the value of wine,” said Robert Nicholson, principle of International Wine Associates in Healdsburg. “We would be naive if we did not realize that was not happening before our very eyes today.”

The sudden retreat is leaving behind plenty of casualties.

Inventories at high-end wineries are building. Wine club memberships are being canceled as consumers lose their jobs or cut back expenses.

Layoffs have hit major wine companies like Constellation, Fosters and Kendall-Jackson.

Grape growers are watching prices plunge 30 or even 40 percent compared to last year's record prices. Sonoma pinot noir that sold for \$2,800 a ton last year might today sell for \$1,800, according to brokers.

And an increasing number of wineries and vineyards are going on the block.

“There are more wineries that are in the process of selling than at any time in my memory,” said Rob McMillan, founder of Silicon Valley Bank's wine division.

The shift is good news for many low-cost producers, such as Central Valley producers E&J Gallo and Bronco Wine Company, both of which are seeing sales soar. But for the North Coast, the heart of the U.S. fine wine industry, it's a far different story.

The majority of the region's wineries are small, family owned operations selling much, if not all, of their wines above \$20.

Sales of those wines are off as much as 15 percent this year, said analyst Jon Fredrikson, partner at Woodside-based Gomberg, Fredrikson & Associates.

For those selling wines over \$50, the landscape looks even bleaker.

Many wines from \$50 to \$125, of which Sonoma and Napa has plenty, are in a "dead zone," McMillan wrote in his April "State of the Wine Industry" report.

Of all winery operators surveyed for the report, those in Sonoma and Napa were the most pessimistic about their prospects in 2009, McMillan wrote.

The second-quarter results showed that pessimism was warranted, said Fred Reno, chairman of the Henry Wine Group in Benicia, a distributor of many high-end imported and domestic wines.

"In my opinion, this was one of the worst quarters that anyone has seen in the fine wine business ever," Reno said. "The consumer has totally traded down and I think wineries are kidding themselves if they think this is a one- or two-year deal. This is a three-year deal, "Unfortunately, it's going to be a real slow comeback," he said.

That's because consumers are unlikely to return to their freewheeling spending habits anytime soon, even if the economy does recover, industry experts agree.

With so many good wines being made at affordable prices, both in the U.S. and abroad, consumers who go hunting for values will inevitably find them.

"Consumers are now saying, 'I traded down, and guess what, I found good wines,'" said John Gillespie, president of the Wine Market Council, which studies the habits of U.S. wine drinkers.

Sonoma County Gazette, "Pomo Elders Speak", October 1-November 4, 2010

<http://wineindustryinsight.com/?p=16414>

<http://www.gualalariver.org/vineyards/Pomo-elders-speak-out.html>