

March 26, 2024

My name is James Greene. I have a bachelor's degree in forestry. I'm a certified arborist and tree risk assessment qualified. I teach a pre-inspector course in vegetation management in the California Community College system for utilities. For the last 4 years I have inspected trees and other vegetation along the utility lines, on and off the ROW (Right of Way) as a contractor. I have inspected from Wrightwood to Running Springs, and from Shaver Lake south in the Sierra Nevada and Sequoia.

I visited the property in Skyforest with the address of 28790 Sycamore Drive, Skyforest, California 92385 on March 26, 2024. I was asked by the property owner, [REDACTED], to look at the situation of her property regarding her trees and the impact of a CUP (Conditional Use Permit) that has been applied for on the adjacent property. My understanding of the said project is a road will be cut into the adjacent property and the road will follow the property line [REDACTED]. Grading and compaction will occur, but final surface is not indicated. My immediate concern is the effect on [REDACTED] property and the trees.

My concerns:

- The trees along the common property line will have their roots severed. Depending on the size of each tree and the site's conditions will depend on the damage done. Concern should be given to the CRZ (critical root zone) of each tree. Both vitality as well as the structural CRZ's.

- The trees on the property I visited and the trees on the adjacent property have all comingled or intertwined their roots.
- The understory trees will most likely survive and adapt.
- The codominant and dominant trees will be put under great stress.
- One Sequoia probably will not survive unless protective measures are taken. It's close enough to the property line that not only will its vitality roots be severed but its stability roots can be affected.
- The Sequoia is out of its natural habitat but shows good vigor.

Additional concerns:

- Cutting the road in is going to open the forested area. Resulting in new edge trees. Failure rates will go up for the trees left. They have not developed taper and flexure wood to withstand the winds. The winds can be very high in the area.
- The native soil will be removed. Other soil will need to be brought in to ensure engineers can get the compaction needed to build the infrastructure.
- Soil compaction will result in suffocation of roots and tree failure.
- If SCE (Southern California Edison) must run lines into the property; if they go overhead there will be a 12-foot clearance that has to be observed if it is a high voltage line. If they go underground, the tree roots will be damaged or destroyed.
- Subsequently, more than the 35 trees that are listed in the CUP will have to be removed, some will be due to mortality issues because of the construction.

Recommendation:

- A certified arborist should be engaged to conduct a thorough tree risk assessment before any construction plans are considered by the county.
- To minimize inevitable losses beyond the trees that would be slated to be cut down, a certified qualified arborist should be hired to work alongside the contractor on any construction project on this land. Even so there are no guarantees there will not be unintended loss of biota on the site.

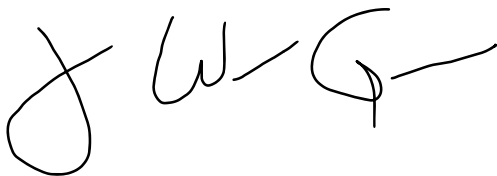
Respectfully submitted,

James William Greene, BScF

ISA certified arborist and TRAQ

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J W G' with a horizontal line extending from the end of the 'G'.