

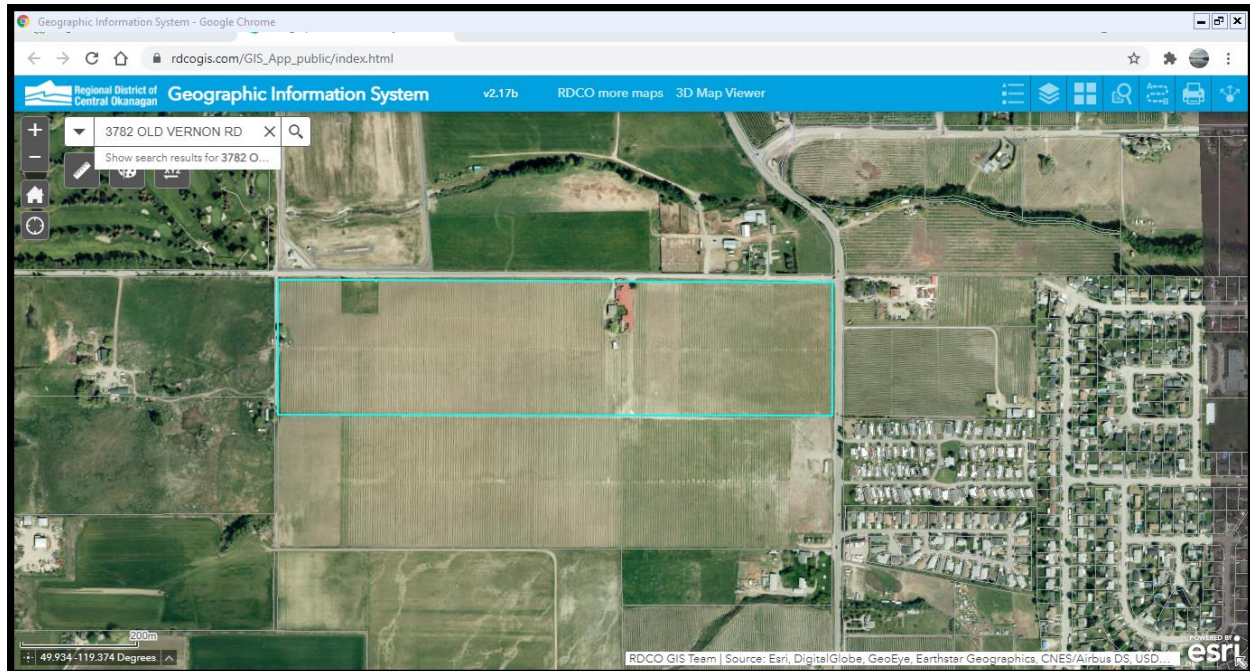
Introduction

This Agrologist report has been prepared for S. Sundher Orchards Ltd. at the request of the Regional District of Central Okanagan for Application 63352 to the Agricultural Land Commission for a Non-Adhering Residential Use Application. The report has been written in consultation with Lynn Lashuk, P.Ag., agent for S. Sundher Orchards Ltd. A site visit to the subject property and orchards owned and operated by S. Sundher Orchards Ltd. was completed by the writer and agent to provide context and background for opinions stated within this report.

Site Overview

The parcel located at 3782 Old Vernon Road (alternate address, 4253 Bulman Road), Kelowna is a 21.3 ha parcel of ALR land within the Regional District of Central Okanagan's boundaries. The land has been in agricultural production for many generations with land use changing to reflect agricultural markets and economic feasibility. Over the years, the land has been used for pasture, ground crops, forage and tree fruit production.

The screenshot below is from the Regional District of Central Okanagan online mapping site. The photo pre-dates the orchard planting on the subject property. The cultivated area is where the trees are now planted in a North-South orientation. The green square of land in the northwest section of the parcel is fenced off from the subject property and is owned by the Kelowna Airport. The non-cultivated land where the buildings and apple bins are pictured is the area where the proposed worker housing will be installed. This is the 4253 Bulman Road civic address. A detailed site plan has been reviewed and the footprint for the proposed housing will exceed the bin storage shown in the photo below. The proposed housing proposal footprint is 3,412 m², approximately 1.6% of the total parcel size of 21.26 Ha.



The sweet cherry orchard on the subject property is continuous with the sweet cherry planting on the adjacent 21.3 ha parcel located to the South at 3510 Old Vernon Road.

The Atlas of Suitable Grape Growing Location in the Okanagan and Similkameen Valleys of BC (<https://a100.gov.bc.ca/pub/acat/public/viewReport.do?reportId=25881>) provides recommendations for grape growing based on soil type, solar radiation, temperature and aspect. These parameters are useful for all crop types, so the information provided by the Atlas has been useful for the subject property site analysis. Soils are reported as well-suited for grape growing, and the soil condition and suitability for cherries is demonstrated by the successful establishment of the new planting. Solar radiation, growing degree days, autumn freeze and winter damage risk and overall site suitability for sweet cherry production has been reviewed against the reference “Replanting Cherries in British Columbia”. Overall, the site is a reasonable location for sweet cherry production, given the choice of new varieties and rootstock, irrigation system, and consideration for climate-related risks.

The orchard was planted in 2019, with the total planted area 40 ha. The cherry varieties are Skeena, *Sweetheart™*, and *Sentennial™*-- all Agriculture and Agri-food Canada Summerland Research and Development Centre selections, bred for the Okanagan tree fruit growers. The varieties are grafted on Mazzard rootstock and planted at 2.1 m (7') in-row by 4.3 m (14') between row spacing resulting in a tree density of 1100 trees per ha. Cropping will begin in 2022 with full production expected by 2025. Commercial sweet cherry producers in the Okanagan can achieve 22,000 kg per ha in a normal crop year from this type of planting.

Irrigation is provided by the Glenmore-Ellison Irrigation District. The irrigation is provided through a solid set system using micro sprinklers and electronic timers to efficiently manage the scheduling and delivery of water to the trees.

The parcel has 3m high perimeter deer fencing. Access to the subject property is from Bulman Road and Old Vernon Road.

Industry Commentary

The BC Cherry Association reports that “currently there is a great demand for Canadian cherries.” <https://www.bccherry.com/faq/>

95% of cherries grown in Canada are from British Columbia.

The subject property will harvest the crop in August and possibly into early September; this provides a market advantage to Okanagan growers as the crop will be the latest cherries in the northern hemisphere. Cherries shipped by air, travel in refrigerated trucks to Vancouver or Edmonton International Airports. Cherries shipped by ocean are packed into refrigerated shipping containers and sent West by truck to Vancouver for Pacific Asian markets, or East by train or truck to Montreal for European destinations across the Atlantic. Cherries destined for export markets are processed following government regulatory requirements.

Cherries from the subject property will be picked by hand and taken to Royal Fruit Packers Ltd., owned by the same owners as the subject property, on the same day where they are cooled, washed, and

packed for sales. The cherries are packed into 5kg and 9kg boxes. Domestic fruit is most often packed into 8x1kg bagged boxes.

Cherry production relies on manual labour for in-field and processing work. The labour force is made up of Canadians and temporary foreign workers. The cherry industry has benefitted from seasonal workers from Quebec and foreign workers from Mexico and the Caribbean. Many workers return year after year to the Okanagan farms for seasonal employment. Accommodation for the workers is paramount to the successful hiring and maintenance of employees. Worker health and safety is a priority in the orchards and in the housing complexes.

The number of workers required for a tree fruit operation varies with the type and stage of the orchards, and the skillset and availability of the workers. Manual labour is required in the field for nursery tree production, planting, pest management (rodents, diseases, insects and weeds), pruning, tree architecture and crop load management and harvest. Manual labour is required at the processing plant for moving fruit, sorting, packing and shipping the crop. The peak labour requirement is during the harvest window, as fruit must be picked at specified maturity parameters to ensure a high quality product is delivered to the market place. The harvest window can fluctuate with crop type and load, weather conditions, and the stage of the orchard.

Diversified orchard operations, such as S. Sundher Orchards Ltd., will bring in workers for cherry and apple production. This is preferable for temporary foreign workers as there is a maximum term allowances of 8 months for a Seasonal Agricultural Worker.

Conclusion

After a thorough review of the S. Sundher Orchards Ltd. and Royal Fruit Packers Ltd. operations and consultation with Dave and Parminder Sandher (owners) and Lynn Lashuk (agent), I conclude that the need for 120 temporary foreign workers is reasonable and that the location at 3782 Old Vernon Road (alternate address 4523 Bulman Road), Kelowna is an efficient use of land within the Agricultural Land Reserve that will benefit the BC and Canadian agricultural industry and the local community.

References

<https://a100.gov.bc.ca/pub/acat/public/viewReport.do?reportId=25881>

Replanting Cherries in British Columbia

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/farming-natural-resources-and-industry/agriculture-and-seafood/programs/treefruit-replant-program/cherrymanual.pdf>

Appendix

Statement of Qualifications as required by the [Governance Act](#)

1. Carl Withler, P.Ag

The author of this report is a Professional Agrologist (#695) registered and in good standing in the province of British Columbia and has been so for over 30 years. Because of this registration he is bound by a code of ethics, guided by standard and normal practices and uses scientific and field information to come to logical and rational recommendations and decisions.

Specific to this report Mr. Withler has spent 40 years in production agriculture working in every commodity from animal husbandry to tree fruit horticulture in Canada and abroad. During his working career Mr. Withler worked very closely with the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC), Ministry of Agriculture Strengthening Farming program staff and Local Government planners to create and review bylaws related to agricultural production. As well, Mr. Withler is relied on by Farm Industry Review board hearings as a “Knowledgeable Person” and allowed to offer opinion regarding normalized farming practices. Recently, the author retired from the provincial civil service as the Industry Specialist for the Tree fruit and Grape industries and is working as an Environmental Farm planner and as a land manager related to Temporary Farm Worker Housing applications. Mr. Withler is now the lead Agrologist for Green Spark Consulting.

2. Lynn Lashuk, P.Ag

Lynn Lashuk, P.Ag. (#1480), is the agent for the Application 63352 to the Agricultural Land Commission for a Non-Adhering Residential Use and the advisor to the author of this report. Lynn Lashuk is registered and in good standing with the BC Institute of Agrologists for over 30 years. As a registrant, Lynn Lashuk is bound by the [BCIA Code of Ethics](#), and has sworn the Professional Oath.

Lynn Lashuk was born into the Kelowna agriculture community mid-20th Century and the ties to the land and the farmers are strong. Work with the Federal and Provincial Agriculture Ministries, allied agriculture industries and organizations, in a variety of capacities, has provided Lynn Lashuk with solid grounding for today’s regulatory framework that guides the diverse farming community in the quest for sustainable production and the journey toward Truth and Reconciliation with Canada’s First Peoples.