

Scott A Alberts
Black Oak Estates
8080 Black Oak Court
Garden Valley, CA 95667
530-333-0336

03/03/2021

RE: Vertebrate Pest Control Research Program

Grantor: CA Department of Food and Agriculture
Attention David Kratville

A.

Project Name: The Owl Project /Birds of Prey for Vertebrate Pest Control

Project leader

The project leader is Scott A Alberts the owner of Black Oak Estates in Garden Valley CA.
Black Oak Estates is located at:

Scott Alberts
Black Oak Estates
8080 Black Oak Court
Garden Valley CA 95633
(530) 333-0336
Email scottins@pacbell.net

I, Scott Alberts will be the project leader. This is my first proposal for a grant that I have ever applied for, and this project really peaks my interest. I believe that my hands on experience with this is very extensive and vertebrates such as moles rates and gophers have a great impact on vineyards and farming. Having a vineyard, farm and orchard on my property gives me first hands experience dealing with the vertebrates and the loss of fruits and vegetables these rodents cause.

In 2005 I started farming my 21.5 acers and began clearing the land and planting a vineyard, a garden and an orchard. I have 16 years of experience dealing with these rodents and how they survive and how they can take over a piece of property as they move to find roots to sustain their colony. I have seen whole tomato plants disappear over night and grape vines stalks eaten through right below the surface of the ground.

I am now 61 years of age and I have been a licensed insurance agent for 36 years. I am the owner of Divide Insurance agency and the Ron Carlon Insurance Agency. I am semi-retired and enjoy working the land and I have a few days a week put aside to work on growing my vineyard and I am looking forward to working on this very interesting project.

I have been working hard since I was 8 years old and have never been unemployed. Starting at age 8, I ran a paper route for the local Green Sheet newspaper in Sacramento. I worked at the local Foothill Farms Dairy processing milk and driving delivery trucks until I was 23. I also worked at the Sacramento Bee Newspaper delivering bundles of papers to Grass Valley and Nevada City. I worked as a sawyer for Truss Com then became a licensed insurance broker for Gene Alberts Insurance Agency. I also started a candle company, Foothill Farms Candle Company, in Foothill Farms CA. In 2000 I started my own insurance agency Divide Insurance Agency. Then in 2005 I moved to Garden Valley and started the Vineyard under the name of Black Oak Estates. The vineyard is growing every year as we clear more land and plant more vines that we start from cutting that we clone from the original vines.

I have 21.5 acres, and a home, in the Sierra Foothills. It's in the town of Garden Valley and I have owned it now for 16 years. The property had a small vineyard with a couple of creeks and ponds with a nice level meadow that I turned into a vineyard. I have been growing wine grapes since the beginning and over the years I have been dealing with all types of Vertebrates. I have used several different methods of extermination trying to get control of the number of moles that have taken over the vineyard and surrounding forest. I have tried the carbon monoxide method, poisons and traps. None of these methods worked and did not slow down the overall increase in the mole population. I became more and more into growing food the organic way and stopped using these methods and just let the moles, rats, rabbits and squirrels live in their environment. Now they have taken over and I need to use a more natural way of dealing with this big problem.

As the owner and proprietor of this land I have studied how these rodents survive in an enclosed environment and how they work their way to the food they are looking for to survive. They have developed miles of underground tunnels and support large colonies that can move through even the hardest soils, shale and rock beds. It's amazing to see how they can do this and the speed that they can travel. This has become a big problem for me and my vineyard. Having a fenced in area to keep the deer out has also stopped the predators from getting in to help control these rodents. The moles have an area that is safe from most predators like foxes, coyotes, bears and mountain lions, but they are not safe from the predators from the sky. They still have to deal with the snakes and the birds of prey.

I would like to get a grant for \$60,000 to do a detailed study on how birds of prey can control the amount of damage from these rodents. I have seen hawks in the daytime land on the vineyard T posts and hunt for moles that surface to the top as they move there dirt out of their tunnels. Owls are nocturnal and hunt at night. We would need special video cameras that film in the dark with no lighting to see how the owls hunt and if they will use the hunting perches to help them find their prey. According to my research an adult Owl can kill over 3,000 rodents a year. That is amazing! I believe that by building owl boxes to create homes for owls and hawks, along with the use of hunting platforms around and in the vineyard, it would be very effective in controlling this problem. The hunting perches can be made in different sizes and diameters to see what works best for the different types of birds that we are studying. Finding the best design that works and attacks the birds of prey will increase their productivity. I suggest that we place high definition cameras on all sides of the vineyard and at each hunting platform to see how the platforms help the birds of prey on their hunt for food. We could design different platform styles at different heights to see what works more effectively. This project will take money and a lot of time building different styles of hunting perches and looking over the videos each day to see how each hunting station works. I would need to hire at least one employee to help with this project. I have a longtime friend that is a hunter and an expert in the field of bird watching. He can recognize and name all the different species of birds and would love to get involved

with this project.

The funds for this could be made out to Scott Alberts or Black Oak Estates at 8080 Black Oak Court in Garden Valley CA. 95633. Phone number 530-642-8799. scottins@pacbell.net I will manage the funds and do reports, logs and photos of this project.

B.

To summarize the problem, the growing vertebrate population is causing damage and a loss of production to vineyards, gardens, and orchards. It is a huge financial loss and hardship to farmers that lose fruit and vegetables from these rodents. We need to find a way to keep these rodents in check and not poison the land at the same time. If you grow organically you risk losing everything when the rodents find your farm. I know from experience that they can and will eat your garden and leave you with nothing. It has happened to me to many times. By using the birds of prey, we can take care of this problem and get rid of these disease carrying rodents. We just need to study, experiment and learn how this will work better to control the growing number of vertebrates. I think this is the best way to go and we need to do is start with this project and learn all we can to make it work.

The success of this project can be measured in the counting of rodents being killed each day and night and the number of birds that occupy the houses. This project will be well worth the expense and will be very interesting project to work on. I have the perfect location and the vineyards, gardens and orchards to do a firsthand study on how the hunting perches will increase the control over these rodents. I also have a lumber mill that we can cut and design the hunting platforms and the owl boxes. I have years of experience in wood working and I will be able to design and build these perches and boxes on my property. We just need money to buy the cameras and pay for an employee to get this study going.

I know a lot of vineyard owners and they are all in support of this effort and are very interested in giving this a try if it works. There are small farms popping up all over Eldorado county that would also benefit from this study. I think with the study and designing of the hunting platforms, perches and houses we can make it easy for farmers to make their own. Having a design that works better and is proven to work will be a game changer. We can produce layouts for people to build their own Owl project that will work and control their vertebrate population.

C.

The project will have a positive impact for all vineyards and farms in the areas where these birds fly and hunt for food. Birds of Prey will move on to other areas as their numbers multiply and help with rodents in towns and cities. It's also an organic way to exterminate the rodents that are taking over our fields, farms and vineyards. The other factor that needs to be recognized is that this will also help the dwindling number of owls and hawks in CA. Numbers have been decreasing to the point that they have put some of the birds of prey on the endangered species list, such as the Red Tail Hawk.

In the long term this project will cause no harm to the earth and will eventually help to stop the vertebrate explosion all over California and it's also nice to see these beautiful birds in the sky.

In the long term it's a win, win for the farmers the land and everybody including the birds of prey. No more poisoning the land, killing off the snakes that help control the vertebrates and making it save to eat real organic vegetables and fruits. Please take a good look at what I propose and lets get started doing what's right with controlling this vertebrate problem. Thank you!

It's well known the birds of prey are a very effective way to control vertebrates but making it easier for

them to operate more efficiently with the use of custom perches will really improve there hunting and control the rodents. Seeing them chose different perches, perch heights and diameters will help us find the right kind of hunting perches that we can design for future use.

D.

The objective in is to see how much more we can make the birds of pray work better and more efficient. We plan on filming the birds using high-definition motion detective cameras that can also film at night. Each week we can review the cameras and find out how each perch was used and what modifications we will need to make. Other test will be on vineyard row width to see if the narrow rows of vines will have an impact on the bigger winged birds. This could be very important for people that want to plant new vineyards and use birds of pray to control their vertebrates.

E.

The first year of this project will be used in experimenting on the building of the perches and making them better. We will try different kinds, heights, angle placement and types of materials. We hope to have this task figured out in 6 months. The second task would be to build the owl boxes adding to the overall effectiveness of the hunt. We will need to install cameras at each box to see who is occupying them and if they show up on the hunting perches. This should be very interesting to see how long it takes for the owls to occupy the houses. We will have to go over the film footage at least every two weeks to see if they are working.

I think the method is very simple and the film will show us all how it is working. It is just a matter of experimenting on the perches and see how they help the birds hunt. The film will tell all. I have the perfect location for this project and I am very willing to do this. I have the write people for the job and they are looking forward in getting this project going.

Sincerely,

Scott A Alberts

2021 VPCRAAC Project Proposal Budget Template

Complete the budget template below by filling in information. This template uses formulas to automatically calculate totals. **Do not** alter the formatting or formulas in cells. Rows may be added to accommodate additional personnel or funding sources, if necessary. Contact the CDFA staff at (916) 262-1102 or David.Kratville@cdfa.ca.gov for help filling out this template.

Project Title: The Owl Project/Birds of Prey for Vertebrate Pest Control
Project Leader(s): Scott A alberts

	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	Total
A. PERSONNEL (name, role, % based on full time salary)				
Salary				
Scott A Alberts Project Leader & designer builder 50%			\$30,000.00	\$30,000.00
Scott R Taylor builder and bird watching expert 10%			\$6,000.00	\$6,000.00
Jose Rodriguez master craftsman and builder 10%			\$6,000.00	\$6,000.00
				\$0.00
Salary Total	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$42,000.00	\$42,000.00
Benefits				
				\$0.00
				\$0.00
				\$0.00
				\$0.00
Benefits Total	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Personnel Cost (A)	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$42,000.00	\$42,000.00
B. OPERATING EXPENSES				
Supplies			\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00
Equipment			\$11,000.00	\$11,000.00
Travel			\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00
Professional/Consultant Services(Cannot exceed \$65/hour)			\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00
Other				\$0.00
Operating Cost (B)	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$18,000.00	\$18,000.00
TOTAL Costs (A+B)	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$60,000.00	\$60,000.00
C. Indirect Costs				
(Cannot Exceed 10% of Total Costs (A+B))				\$0.00
TOTAL CDFA FUNDING REQUESTED (A+B+C)	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$60,000.00	\$60,000.00
D. OTHER FUNDING SOURCES				
				\$0.00
				\$0.00
				\$0.00
				\$0.00
TOTAL OTHER FUNDING (C)	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET (A+B+C+D)	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$60,000.00	\$60,000.00