

ADA NOTICE AND HEARING IMPAIRED PROVISIONS:

It is the policy of the City of Fort Bragg to offer its public programs, services and meetings in a manner that is readily accessible to everyone, including those with disabilities. Upon request, this agenda will be made available in appropriate alternative formats to persons with disabilities.

If you need assistance to ensure your full participation, please contact the City Clerk at (707) 961-2823. Notification 48 hours in advance of any need for assistance will enable the City to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility.

This notice is in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (28 CFR, 35.102-35.104 ADA Title II).



City of Fort Bragg

416 N Franklin Street
Fort Bragg, CA 95437
Phone: (707) 961-2823
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Text File

File Number: 25-398

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Agenda Number: 1A.

Engaging the Community for Public Comment; Environmental Impact Report and Scoping Meeting for the Water Storage Reservoirs and Community Forest Project



Fort Bragg Water Storage Reservoir and Community Forest Project Scoping Meeting Meeting Agenda

- **Introductions**
- **Scoping Purpose**
- **Project Background**
- **Proposed Project**
- **What is CEQA?**
- **CEQA Environmental Analysis**
- **Comments**

Links to Notice of Preparation:

<https://www.city.fortbragg.com/home/showpublisheddocument/7004/638932013658330071>





NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT AND SCOPING MEETING

DATE: September 10, 2025

TO: State Clearinghouse
State Responsible Agencies
State Trustee Agencies
Mendocino County Clerk
Other Public Agencies
Organizations and Interested Persons

SUBJECT: Notice of Preparation of an Environmental Impact Report and Scoping Meeting for the Water Storage Reservoirs and Community Forest Project

LEAD AGENCY: City of Fort Bragg
Public Works Department
416 North Franklin Street
Fort Bragg, California 95437

PROJECT PLANNER: Diane O'Connor, Assistant City Engineer
doconnor@fortbraggca.gov
(707) 961-2823 x134

PURPOSE OF NOTICE: This is to notify public agencies and the general public that the City of Fort Bragg, as the Lead Agency, will prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Water Storage Reservoirs and Community Forest Project (proposed project). The City of Fort Bragg is interested in the input and/or comments of public agencies and the public as to the scope and content of the environmental information that is germane to the agencies' statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed project, and public input. Responsible/trustee agencies will need to use the EIR prepared by the City of Fort Bragg when considering applicable permits, or other approvals for the proposed project.

COMMENT PERIOD: The 30-day public review period will begin on **September 16, 2025** and **conclude on October 15, 2025**. Consistent with the time limits mandated by State law, your input, comments or responses must be received in writing and sent at the earliest possible date, but not later than **5:00 PM, October 15, 2025**. Please send your comments (including the name for a contact person in your agency) to: Attn: Diane O'Connor, Assistant City Engineer, at the City of Fort Bragg, 416 North Franklin Street, Fort Bragg, California 95437; or by email to doconnor@fortbraggca.gov.

SCOPING MEETING: The City of Fort Bragg will conduct two public scoping meetings to solicit input and comments from public agencies and the general public on the proposed Project and scope of the EIR. These scoping meetings will be held on the same day on **September 16, 2025 at 12:30pm to 2:00pm** and **5:30pm to 7:00pm**. Both meetings will have the same form, content, and opportunity to provide input and comments. The meetings will be held at the Fort Bragg Town Hall located at 363 North Main Street, Fort Bragg, California 95437. Interested parties may attend in-person or view the meeting online via Zoom.

Link to 12:30 meeting: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81413793703>

Link to 5:30 meeting: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88139626522>

Representatives from the City of Fort Bragg and the EIR consultant team will be available to address questions regarding the EIR process and scope. If you have any questions regarding the scoping meeting, contact Diane O'Connor, Assistant City Engineer, at the City of Fort Bragg, at (707) 961-2823 x134 or doconnor@fortbraggca.gov.

PROJECT LOCATION AND SETTING: The project site is located southeast of the City of Fort Bragg and north of Highway 20 in Mendocino County, California. See Figure 1 and Figure 2 for the Project's regional location and local context of the project site. The project site encompasses approximately 582 acres and consists of six parcels identified by Assessor's Parcel Numbers (APNs) 019-070-07, 019-070-10, 019-070-11, 019-080-14, 019-080-16, and 019-080-23. The project site is located approximately 2.0 miles east of South Main Street/Highway 1 (a two- to four-lane conventional highway managed by the California Department of Transportation [Caltrans]) and is located outside of the Coastal Zone. The project site is immediately southeast of the City's Summers Lane Reservoir. A Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) utility easement bisects the site in a generally northwest-southeast line.

The project site is largely undeveloped and contains forest and dirt roads and trails. Trees in the project site include Mendocino cypress, bishop pine, redwood, Bolander's beach pine, and pygmy manzanita. The project site is primarily zoned as Timber Production/Forest Land. Portions of the site are classified as Freshwater Forested/Shrub Wetland.¹ The project site is located in Zone "X," an area of minimal flood hazard, as shown on Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) National Flood Hazard Layer FIRMette map number 06045C1017F effective June 2, 2011.² The project site has variable topography with elevations ranging from approximately 317 feet to 533 feet above mean sea level.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The proposed project includes construction of three raw water reservoirs and development of a publicly-accessible community forest. Each reservoir would have a storage capacity of 45 acre-feet (approximately 14.6 million gallons), for a combined storage capacity of 135 acre-feet (approximately 44 million gallons). The reservoirs would be located approximately 0.3 mile southeast of Summers Lane Reservoir, north of an existing dirt road and south of the PG&E utility easement. The project would include a lot line adjustment such that the three reservoirs are within one parcel. A raw water pipeline, approximately 5,000 feet in length, would travel along the reservoirs to the northwest and would turn east at Summers Lane Reservoir to

¹ United States Fish and Wildlife Service. 2025. National Wetlands Inventory. <https://fwsprimary.wim.usgs.gov/wetlands/apps/wetlands-mapper/>

² Federal Emergency Management Agency. FEMA's National Flood Hazard Layer Viewer. <https://hazards-fema.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=8b0adb51996444d4879338b5529aa9cd&extent=-121.94529102661183,36.5159779735144,-121.90374897338809,36.53322138877889>

connect to the City's existing water infrastructure. The reservoirs would be filled during the winter with water pumped up from the Noyo River or from Waterfall Gulch. Water would be drawn from the reservoirs during summer when flows in the channels are low, reducing the impact on aquatic species. The water would flow primarily by gravity to the City's Water Treatment Plant.

A two-bedroom, two-bathroom caretaker unit and storage building would be constructed adjacent to the Summers Lane Reservoir, on APN 019-070-11. A second caretaker unit may also be constructed. Figure 3 shows the proposed conceptual site plan.

The proposed community forest, which would encompass the remainder of the project site, may include public trails throughout the project site. A trailhead, parking lot, and vault toilet would be constructed at an existing disturbed site approximately 750 feet north of Highway 20 and Gravel Pit Road. The parking lot would be approximately 1,800 square feet.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES: This project is critical to ensure a reliable supply of water to residents during periods of drought. The overall objectives herein include:

1. Maintain consistency with the regulatory requirements of the Lead Agency and the Responsible Agencies;
2. Result in a more reliable supply of water under drought conditions;
3. Minimize impacts to the environment by (a) optimizing reservoir location, and (b) increasing summer and fall in-stream flows by filling the reservoir in the winter; and
4. Protect sensitive species through the creation of conservation easements and a community forest.

PROJECT APPROVALS: The City of Fort Bragg will be the Lead Agency for the proposed project, pursuant to the CEQA Guidelines Section 15050. If the final City decision making body, the City Council, certifies the EIR in accordance with CEQA requirements, the City may use the EIR to support the following actions:

- Adoption of a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP);
- Approval of a Zoning Clearance (ZC);
- Approval of Design Review;
- Approval of a Parcel Merger;
- Approval of a Sign Permit;
- Approval of an Encroachment Permit;
- Approval of a Grading Permit; and
- Approval of a Building Permit.

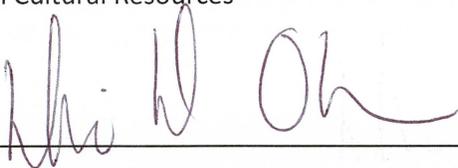
The proposed project would also require approval from the Mendocino Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) to annex the project site into City limits.

Finally, construction activities of the proposed project will be subject to the Mendocino County Air Quality Management District (MCAQMD).

AREAS OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS: The Draft EIR will examine the environmental topics contained in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines. The topics to be addressed in detail in the Draft EIR include the following:

- Agriculture and Forestry Resources
- Air Quality

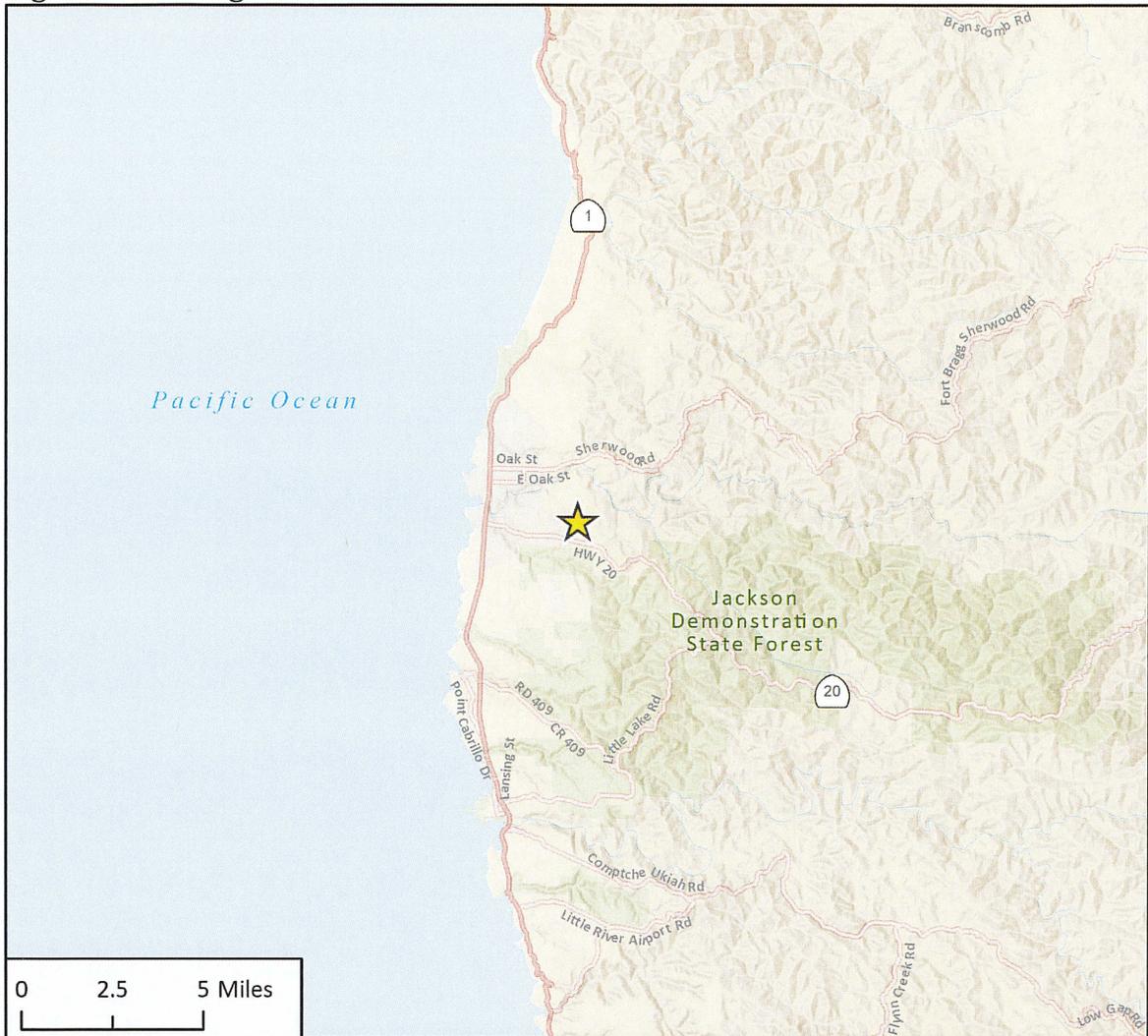
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geology and Soils
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Noise
- Transportation
- Tribal Cultural Resources

Signature:  Date: 9/10/2025

Name/Title: Diane O'Connor, Assistant City Engineer

Phone/Email: (707) 961-2823 x134 / doconnor@fortbraggca.gov

Figure 1 Regional Location



Imagery provided by Esri and its licensors © 2024.

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Fig. 1 Regional Location

★ Project Location



Figure 2 Project Site Location

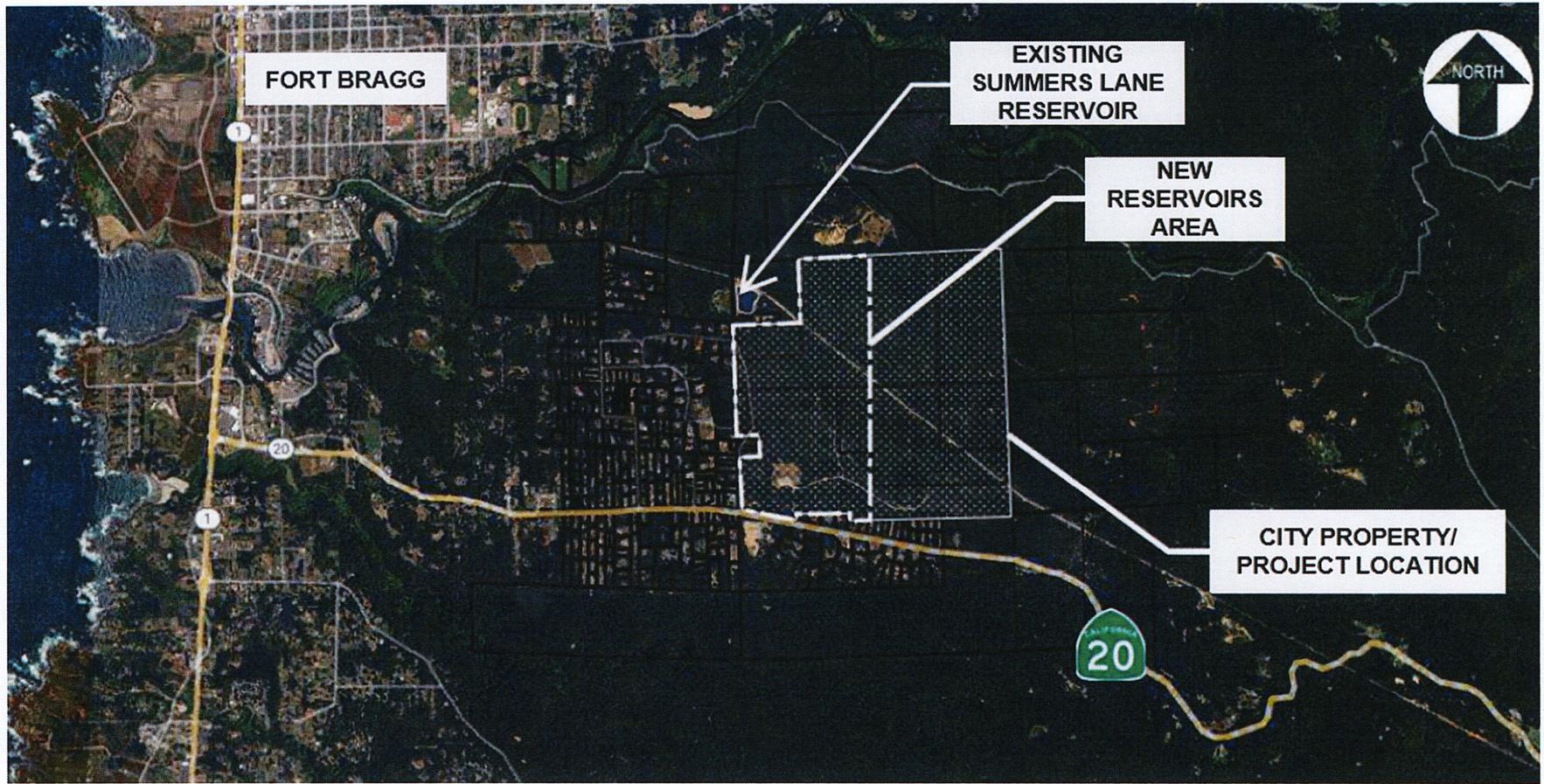
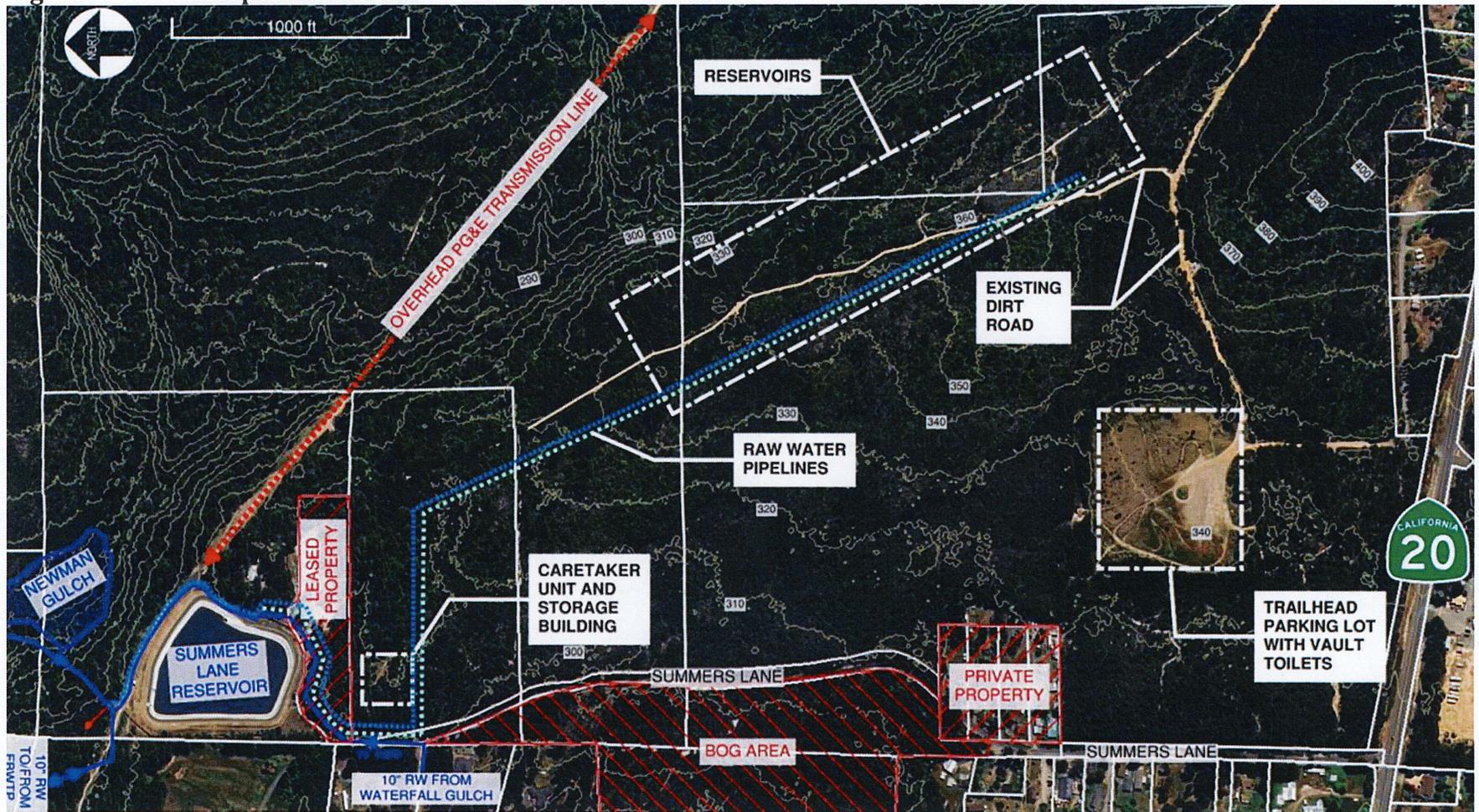


Figure 3 Conceptual Site Plan





MEDIA CONTACT

Diane O'Connor

Assistant City Engineer

(707) 961 2823 ext 134

doconnor@fortbraggca.gov

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

City of Fort Bragg to Host Public Scoping Session on Water Storage Reservoirs and Community Forest

September 11, 2025; Fort Bragg, CA- The City of Fort Bragg will host a **Public Scoping Session** for the proposed **Water Storage Reservoirs and Community Forest Project** on **Tuesday, September 16, 2025, at Town Hall**. To encourage maximum participation, two sessions will be held:

- **12:30 – 1:30 PM & 5:30 – 6:30 PM**

Both meetings will be broadcast on **Channel 3** and streamed live on the **City's Facebook page**. Please note: **public comments will only be accepted in person** at the meetings or in writing.

Meeting Links

- **12:30 PM Session** - <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81413793703>
- **5:30 PM Session** - <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88139626522>

The **30-day public comment period** will open on **September 16, 2025**, and close on **October 15, 2025, at 5:00 PM**. Written comments may be submitted at any time during this period.

Project Overview

The project proposes construction of **three new reservoirs** (each approximately **45 acre-feet**, similar in size to the existing Summers Lane Reservoir), along with related infrastructure such as piping, access, storage, and a caretaker unit. The reservoirs would occupy about **30 acres of a 582-acre parcel** located off Summers Lane at Highway 20 (the former MCRPD property).

The site is heavily forested with **redwoods, pines, and Mendocino cypress trees**—a special-status species that is a critical component of the **Mendocino Cypress Woodland**, as mapped by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). The renowned **“pygmy cypress”** are Mendocino cypress adapted to nutrient-poor soils.



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To minimize environmental impact, the reservoirs are proposed for the most **previously disturbed areas** of the property. The remaining acreage will be considered for **conservation easements, community forest development, and other potential amenities and uses.**

Project Partnerships

The City is working closely with:

- **Mendocino Land Trust (MLT):** Conservation easement and community forest planning
- **Rincon Consultants:** Environmental evaluations
- **Waterworks Engineers:** Reservoir design and infrastructure
- **WRA:** Biological analysis and support

The City invites the community to take part in this important planning process and share their input on how best to balance **critical water storage needs** with the **protection and stewardship of this unique natural property.**





CONTACTO PARA MEDIOS

Alfredo Huerta
Assistant City Engineer
(707) 961 2823 ext 138
ahuerta@fortbraggca.gov

COMUNICADO DE PRENSA

PARA PUBLICACIÓN INMEDIATA

La Ciudad de Fort Bragg llevará a cabo una Sesión de Alcance Público sobre el Proyecto de Depósitos de Agua y Parque Forestal

11 de septiembre 2025; Fort Bragg, CA - La Ciudad de Fort Bragg llevará a cabo una **Sesión de Alcance Público** para el propuesto **Proyecto de Depósitos de Agua y Parque Forestal** el **martes, 16 de septiembre de 2025**, en el **Ayuntamiento (Town Hall)**. Para fomentar la máxima participación, se realizarán dos sesiones:

- de **12:30 – 1:30 PM** y de **5:30 – 6:30 PM**

Ambas reuniones se transmitirán por **Canal 3** y en vivo a través de la **página de Facebook de la Ciudad**. Por favor, tome en cuenta: **los comentarios públicos solo se aceptarán en persona** durante las reuniones o por escrito.

Enlaces a las reuniones

- **Sesión de las 12:30 PM** - <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81413793703>
- **Sesión de las 5:30 PM** - <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88139626522>

El **período de comentarios públicos de 30 días** comenzará el **16 de septiembre de 2025** y cerrará el **15 de octubre de 2025 a las 5:00 PM**. Los comentarios por escrito se podrán enviar en cualquier momento durante este período.

Resumen del Proyecto

El proyecto propone la construcción de **tres nuevos depósitos** (cada uno de aproximadamente **45 acre-pies**, similar en tamaño al actual depósito de Summers Lane), junto con la infraestructura relacionada, como tuberías, accesos, almacenamiento y una unidad para cuidador. Los depósitos ocuparían alrededor de **30 acres de una parcela de 582 acres** ubicada en Summers Lane, en la carretera 20 (la antigua propiedad de MCRPD).

El terreno está densamente cubierto de **secuoyas, pinos y cipreses de Mendocino**, una especie con estatus especial que constituye un componente crítico del **Bosque de**



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Ciprés de Mendocino, mapeado por el Departamento de Pesca y Vida Silvestre de California (CDFW). Los conocidos “**cipreses enanos**” (**pygmy cypress**) son cipreses de Mendocino adaptados a suelos de nutrientes escasos.

Para minimizar el impacto ambiental, se propone ubicar los depósitos en las áreas **más alteradas previamente** de la propiedad. El resto del terreno será considerado para **servidumbres de conservación, el desarrollo de un parquet forestal y otros posibles usos y servicios**.

Colaboraciones del Proyecto

La Ciudad trabaja en estrecha colaboración con:

- **Mendocino Land Trust (MLT):** Planificación de la servidumbre de conservación y parquet forestal
- **Rincon Consultants:** Evaluaciones ambientales
- **Waterworks Engineers:** Diseño de depósitos e infraestructura
- **WRA:** Análisis biológico y apoyo técnico

La Ciudad invita a la comunidad a participar en este importante proceso de planificación y a compartir sus aportes sobre cómo equilibrar mejor las **necesidades críticas de almacenamiento de agua** con la **protección y gestión responsable de esta propiedad natural única**.





Fort Bragg Water Storage Reservoir and Community Forest Project

Public Scoping Meeting

September 16, 2025



Agenda

- Introductions (5 min)
- Scoping Purpose (5 min)
- Project Background (10 min)
- Proposed Project (20 min)
- What is CEQA? (5 min)
- CEQA Environmental Analysis (5 min)
- Comments (15 min)



Introductions



Introductions

- City Staff
 - Diane O'Connor, Assistant City Engineer
- Mendocino Land Trust
 - Conrad Kramer, Executive Director
 - Emily Griffen, Director of Land Protection
 - Anna Bride, Stewardship Project Manager
- Rincon Consultants – Environmental Analysis
 - Nick Carter, Environmental Planner
 - Amanda Antonelli, Project Manager



Scoping Purpose

Scoping Purpose

- Scoping marks the beginning of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) process for Environmental Impact Reports (EIRs).
- The purpose of scoping is to identify potential environmental issues related to a project **before preparing an EIR.**

Scoping Purpose

Introduce

- Introduce the proposed project to the community and interested agencies

Outline

- Outline the environmental review process and identify opportunities for public input

Solicit

- **Solicit public comments** on potential environmental impacts, mitigation measures, and project alternatives

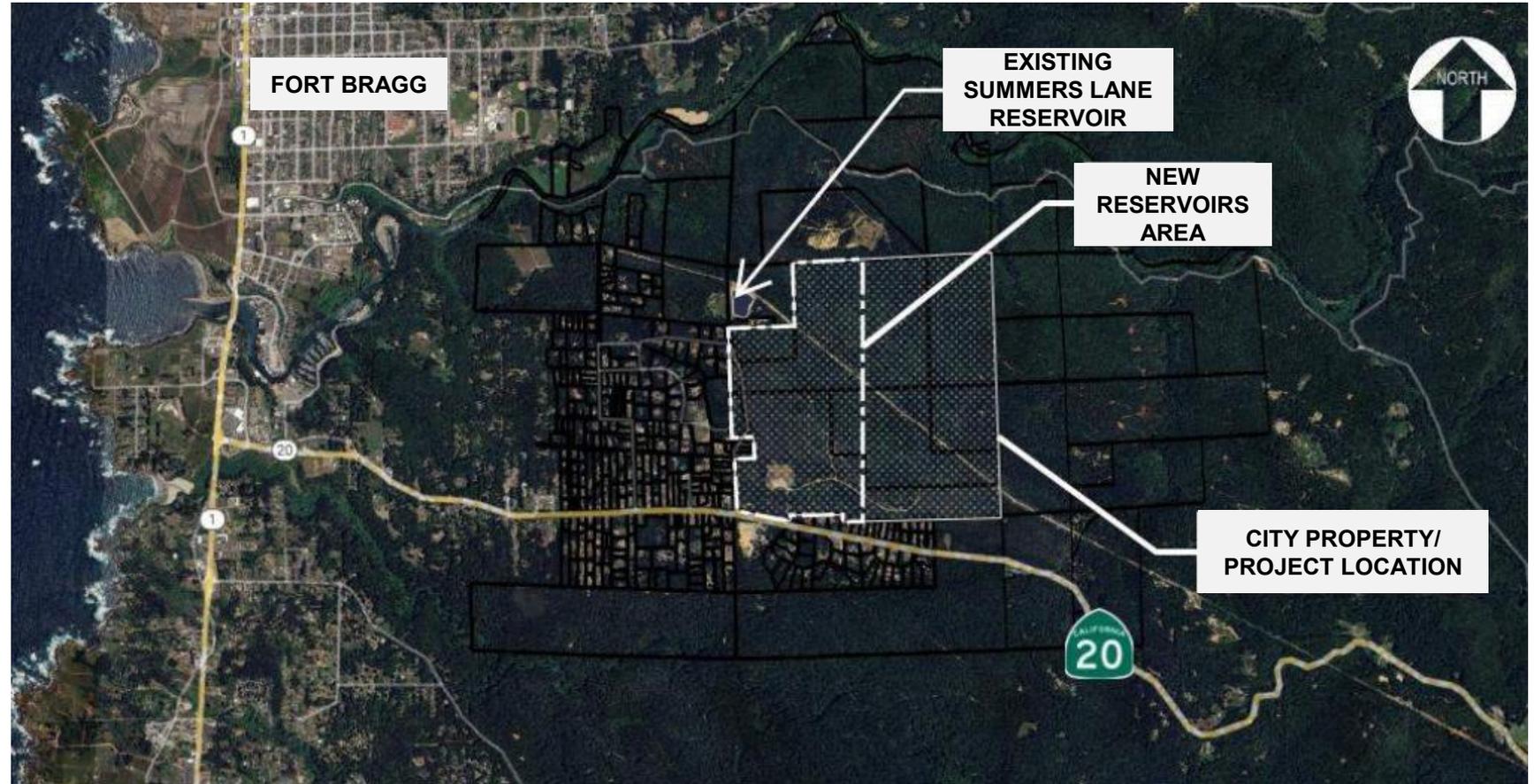




Project Background

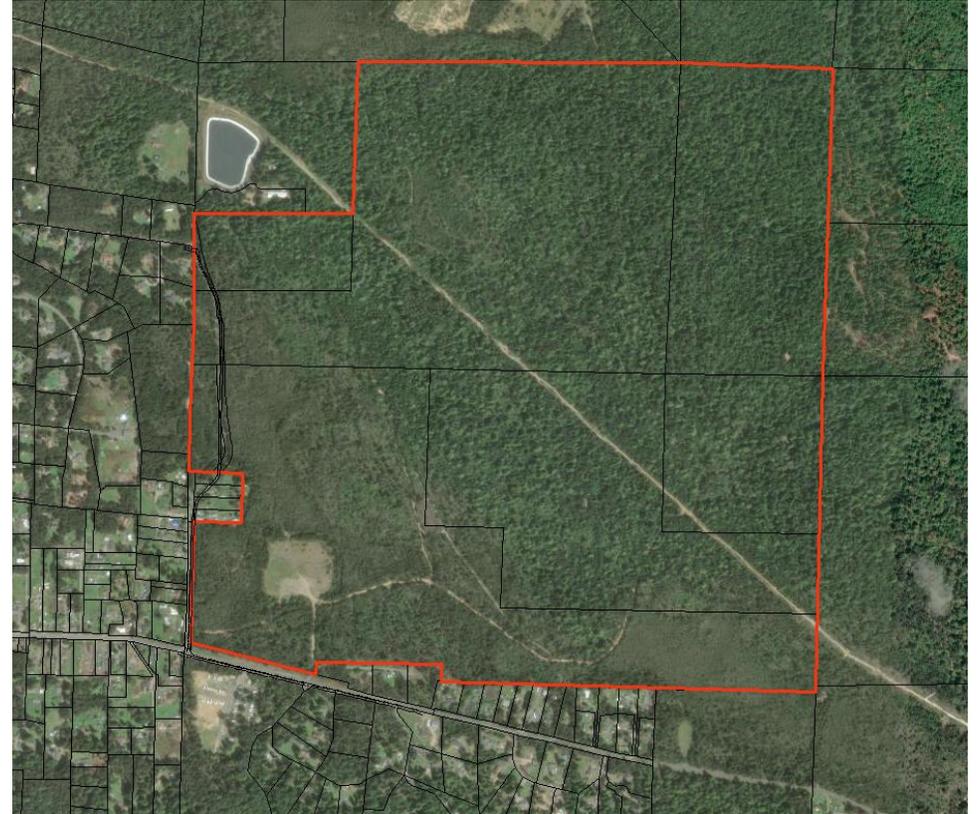
Project Location

- Southeast of the City and north of Highway 20
- Six City-owned parcels
- 582 acres
- Currently in County jurisdiction – plan to annex to City



Site History

- Originally owned by timber companies - logging was primary use – former residence near Humane Society was burned – still has well and septic
- Proposed use as Golf Course –EIR completed in 2005 but not adopted/recorded
- Purchased by MCRPD in 2008
- Proposed as OHV park in 2018
- Property has history of trespass and dumping
- Woodland associations mapped by CDFW in 2015-2018 – in BIOS database
- Purchased by City in 2023
- Updated mapping by WRA in 2023 over proposed reservoir area



Mendocino Cypress Woodland Assoc.

- Mendocino cypress has limited distribution – coastal Mendocino and parts of coastal Sonoma Counties
- Occur on old coastal terrace deposits
- Pygmy forms found in areas with oligotrophic (nutrient poor) soils.



Full size Mendocino cypress at Newman Reservoir (CDFW)



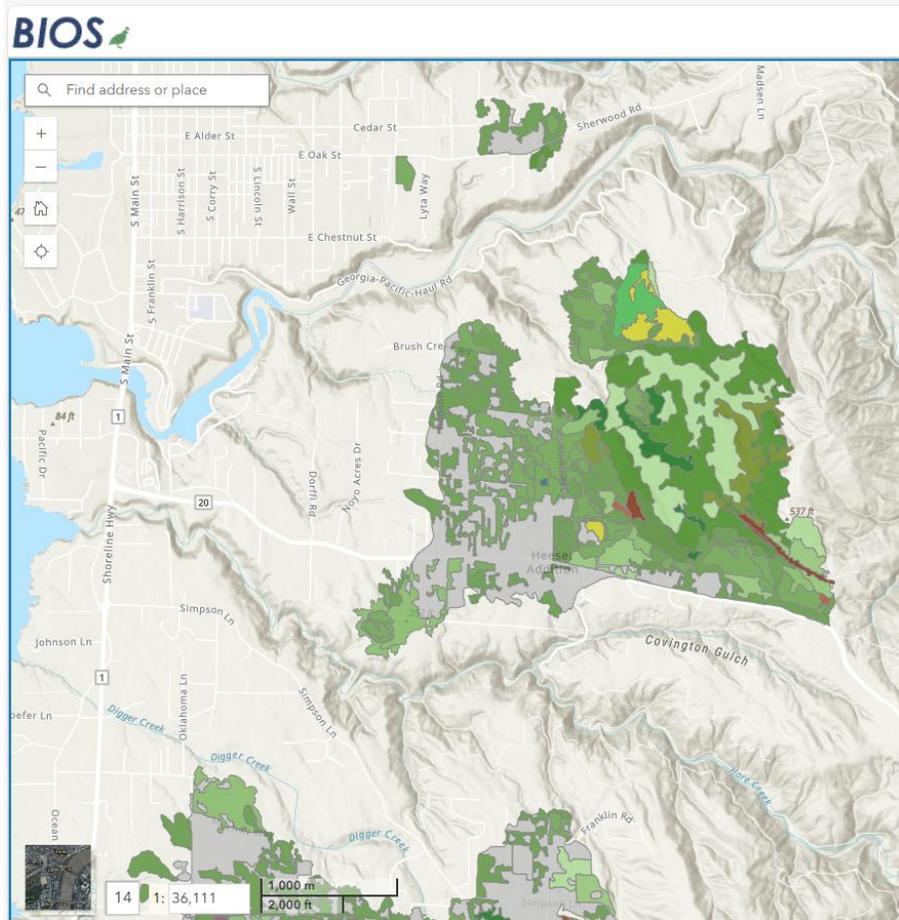
BIOS database



Pygmy cypress along boardwalk (*inaturalist*)

Reference: Classification and Mapping of Mendocino Cypress (*Hesperocyparis pygmaea*) Woodland and Related Vegetation on Oligotrophic Soils, Mendocino and Sonoma Counties, California. Todd Keeler-Wolf et al. 2019 Link: <https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=161736&inline>.

Mendocino Cypress Woodland Assoc.



Legend

Vegetation - Mendocino Cypress and Related Vegetation [ds2805]

MapClass

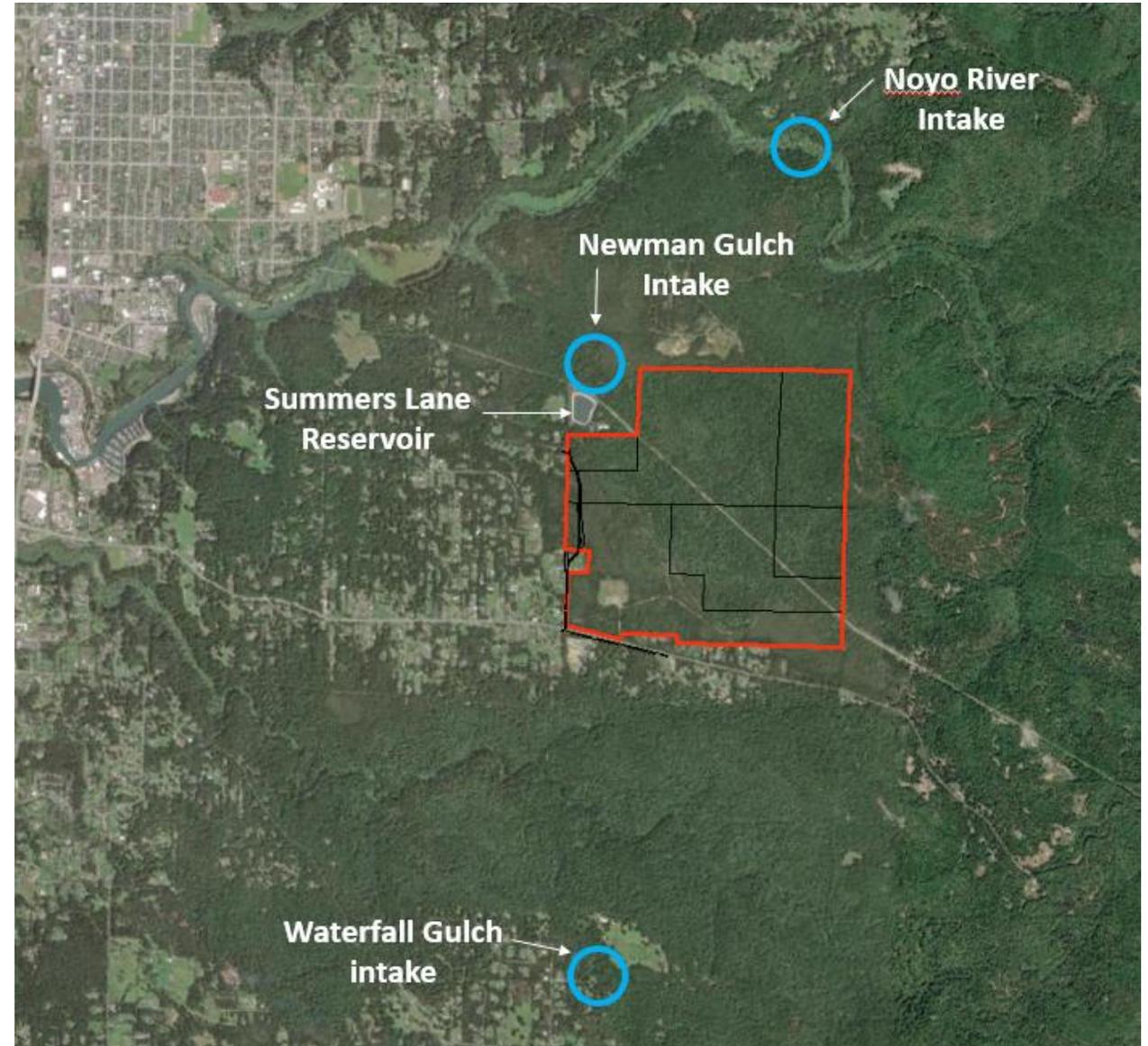
- Sequoia sempervirens Alliance
- Sequoia sempervirens - Hesperocyparis pygmaea Provisional Association
- Forest Plantation and Agroforestry
- Hesperocyparis pygmaea Alliance
- Hesperocyparis pygmaea - Pinus contorta ssp. bolanderi - Pinus muricata / Rhododendron macrophyllum Association
- Hesperocyparis pygmaea - Pinus contorta ssp. bolanderi / Rhododendron columbianum Association
- Hesperocyparis pygmaea - Pinus contorta ssp. bolanderi / Rhododendron columbianum FEN VARIANT
- Hesperocyparis pygmaea - Pinus muricata / Arctostaphylos nummularia Association
- Pinus muricata - Chrysolepis chrysophylla / Arctostaphylos nummularia Association
- Pinus muricata - Notholithocarpus densiflorus Provisional Association
- Sequoia sempervirens - Pinus muricata Provisional Association
- Pseudotsuga menziesii - Notholithocarpus densiflorus / Rhododendron macrophyllum Association

- Arctostaphylos columbiana Alliance
- Arctostaphylos nummularia Association
- Chrysolepis chrysophylla / Vaccinium ovatum Association
- Cortaderia (jubata, seloana)
- Rubus armeniacus Semi-Natural Association
- Rhododendron columbianum Alliance
- Vancouverian Freshwater Wet Meadow and Marsh Group
- Water
- Temperate Freshwater Floating Mat Group
- Pasture and Hay Field Crop
- Anthropogenic areas of little or no vegetation
- Built-up and Urban Disturbance

Website: <https://apps.wildlife.ca.gov/bios6/>

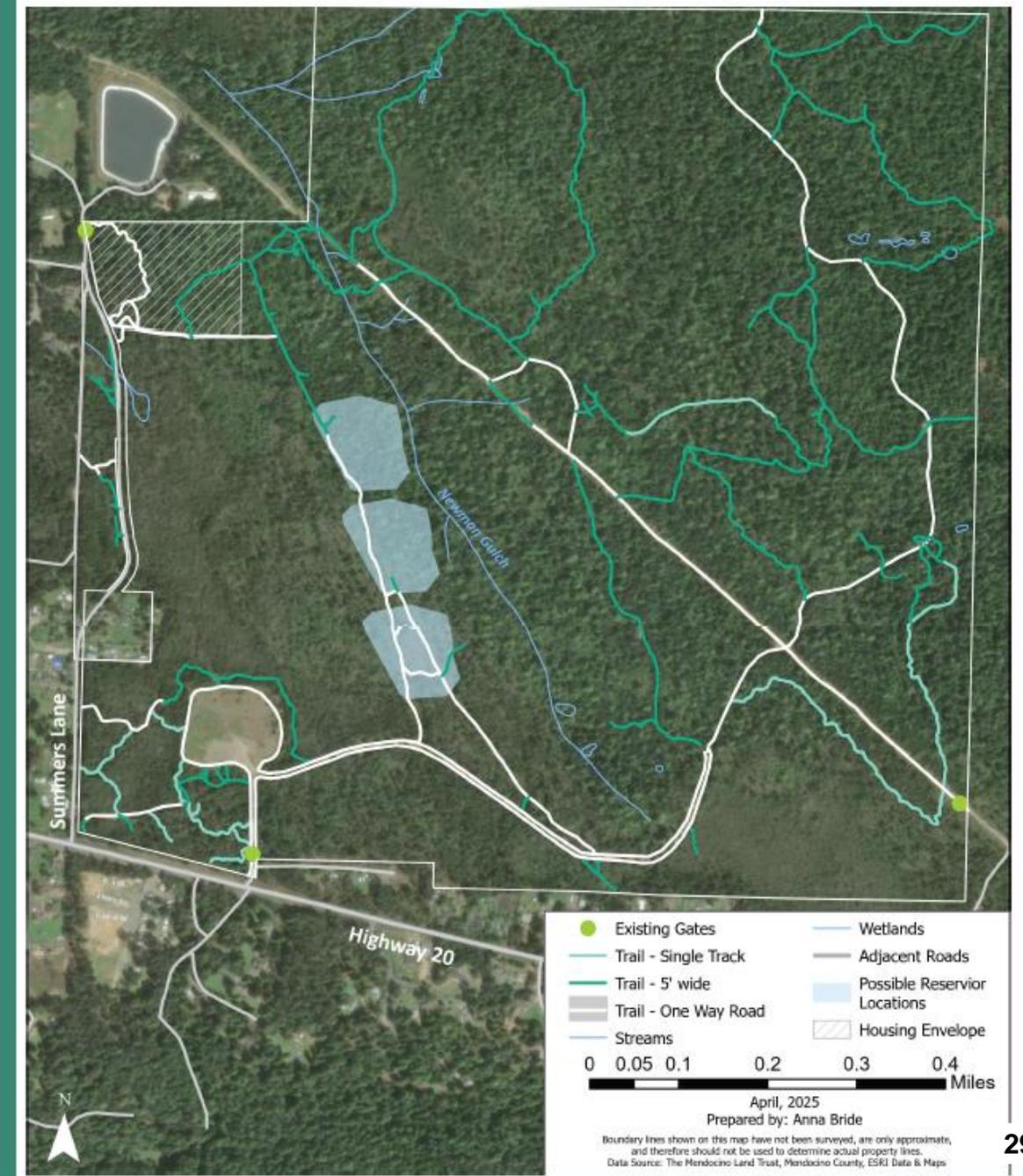
Existing Conditions

- Current Raw Water Supply
 - Noyo River
 - Waterfall Gulch
 - Newman Reservoir
- Waterfall Gulch water is used to fill Summers Lane Reservoir – provides water supply in summer when Noyo flows are low and impacted by high tides

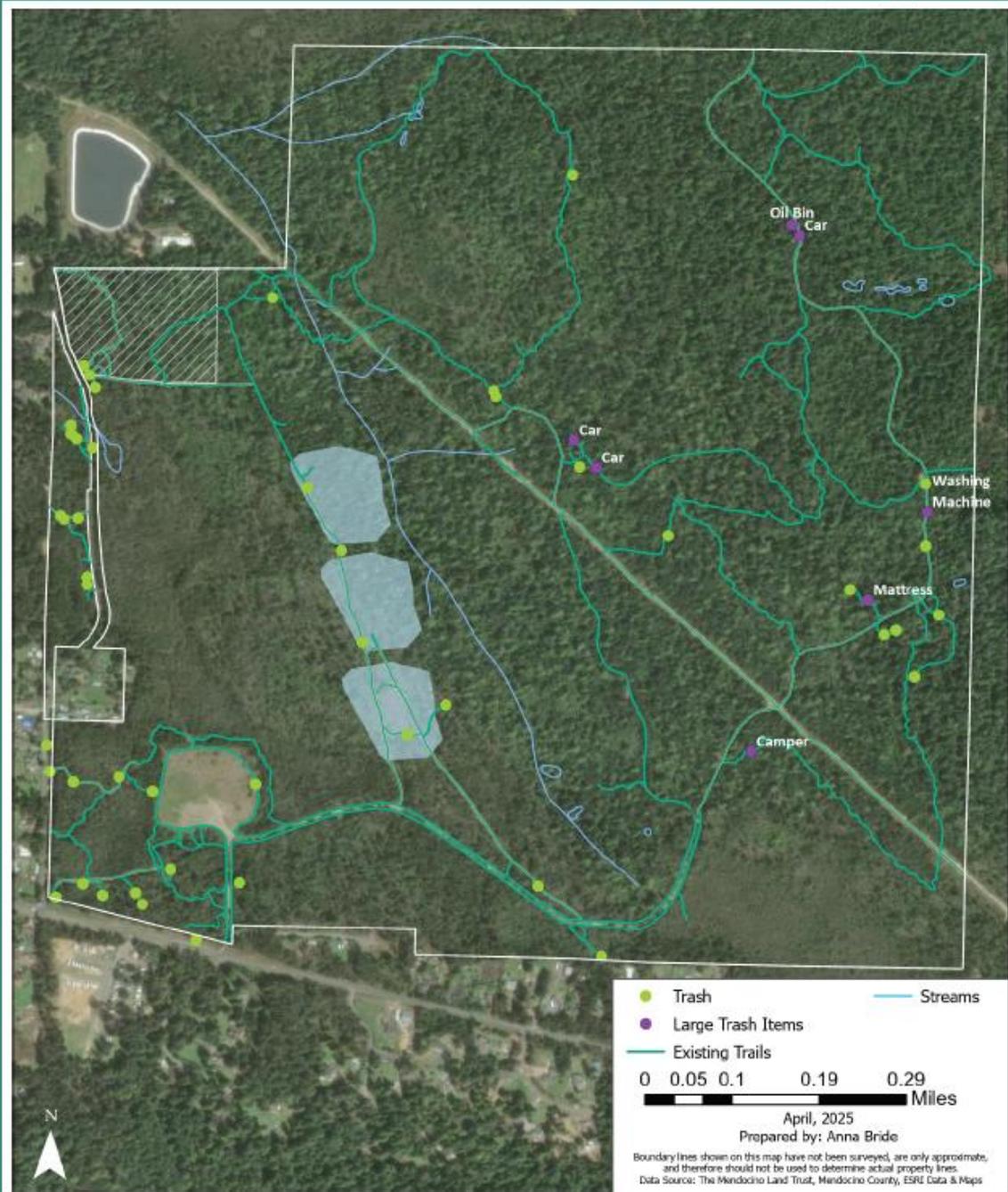


Existing Conditions

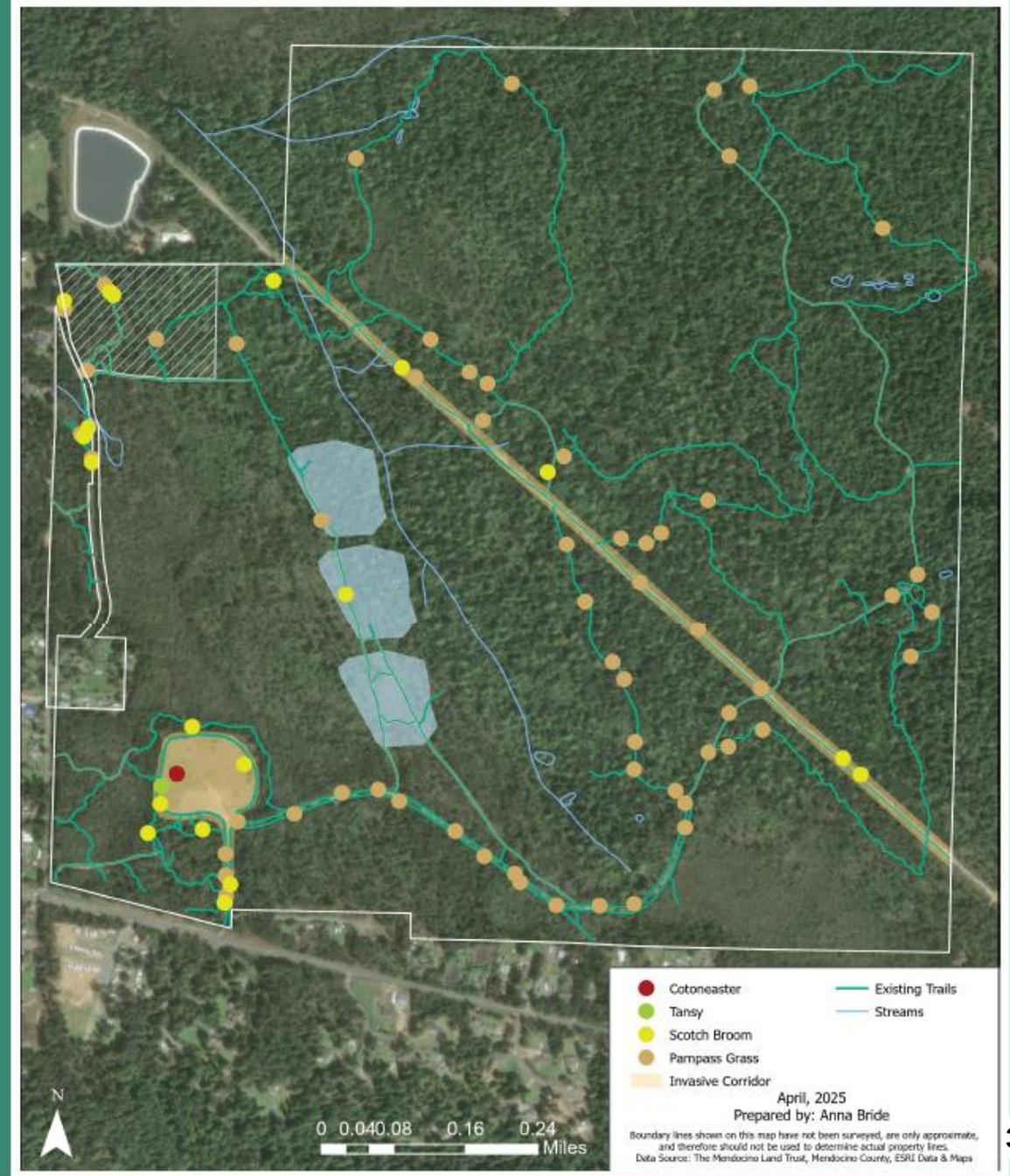
- Property inventory includes
 - Existing roads/trails
 - Trash & dumping areas
 - Invasive/Non-native species
 - Erosion/Flooding areas
 - Trespassing areas



Trash & Dumping Sites



Invasive Species Inventory





Proposed Project

Project Purpose

- Facilitate a reliable supply of water to residents during periods of drought
 - Provide raw water storage via three water reservoirs and associated infrastructure
 - Project will allow the City to fill the reservoirs from the Noyo River in winter when flows are high and draw from them in the summer during periods of drought, leaving more water in-stream for aquatic species
- Protect sensitive species through the creation of conservation easements and a community forest

Project Description

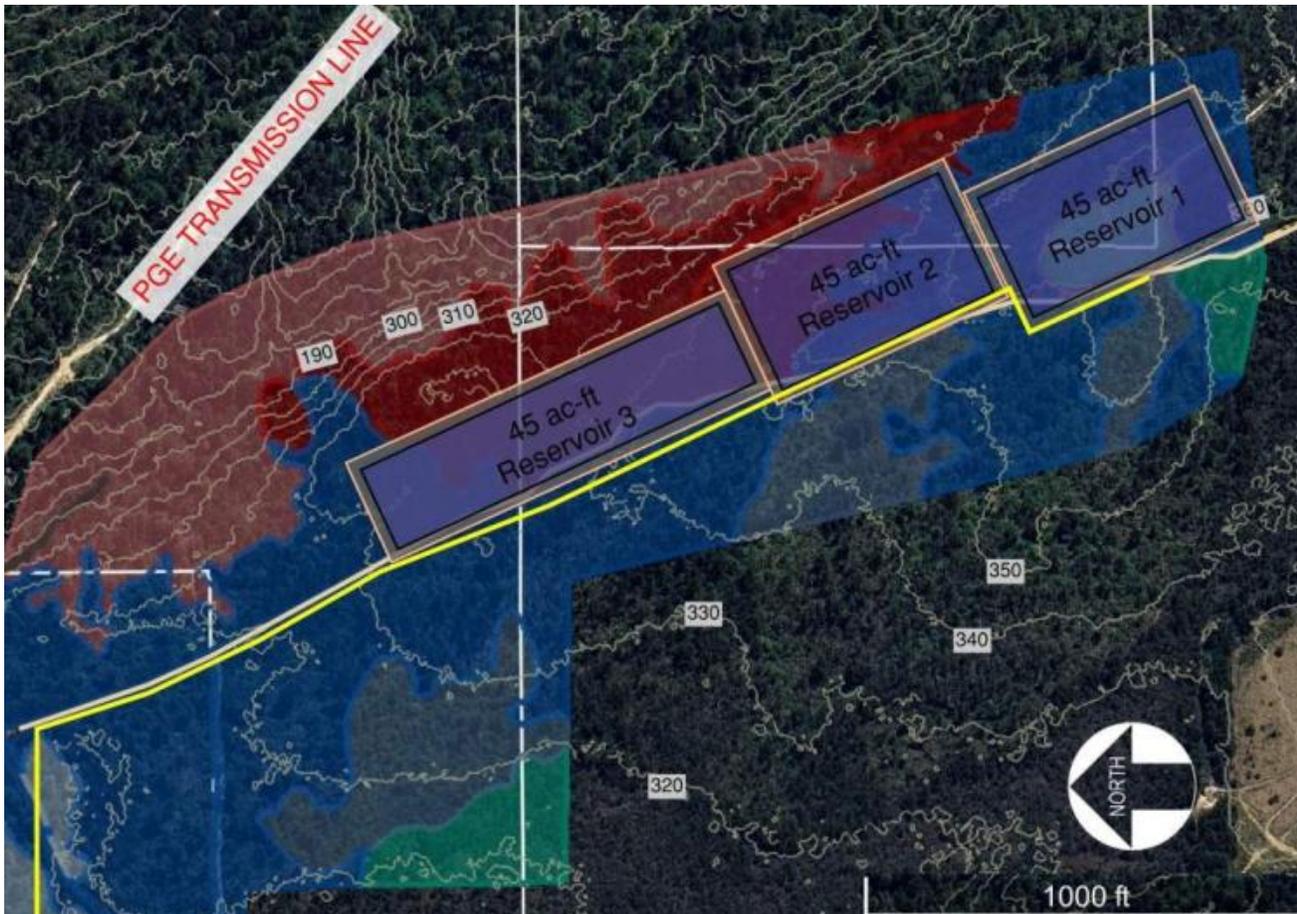
- Three water reservoirs (26.2-acre footprint of a total project area of 582 acres)
- Water transmission infrastructure (pipelines, etc.)
- Caretaker unit(s)
- Community forest
 - Parking lot and pit toilet
 - Trailhead and on-site trails

Conceptual Site Plan

Goal of current layout is to maximize the use of already disturbed areas



Proposed Reservoir Layout

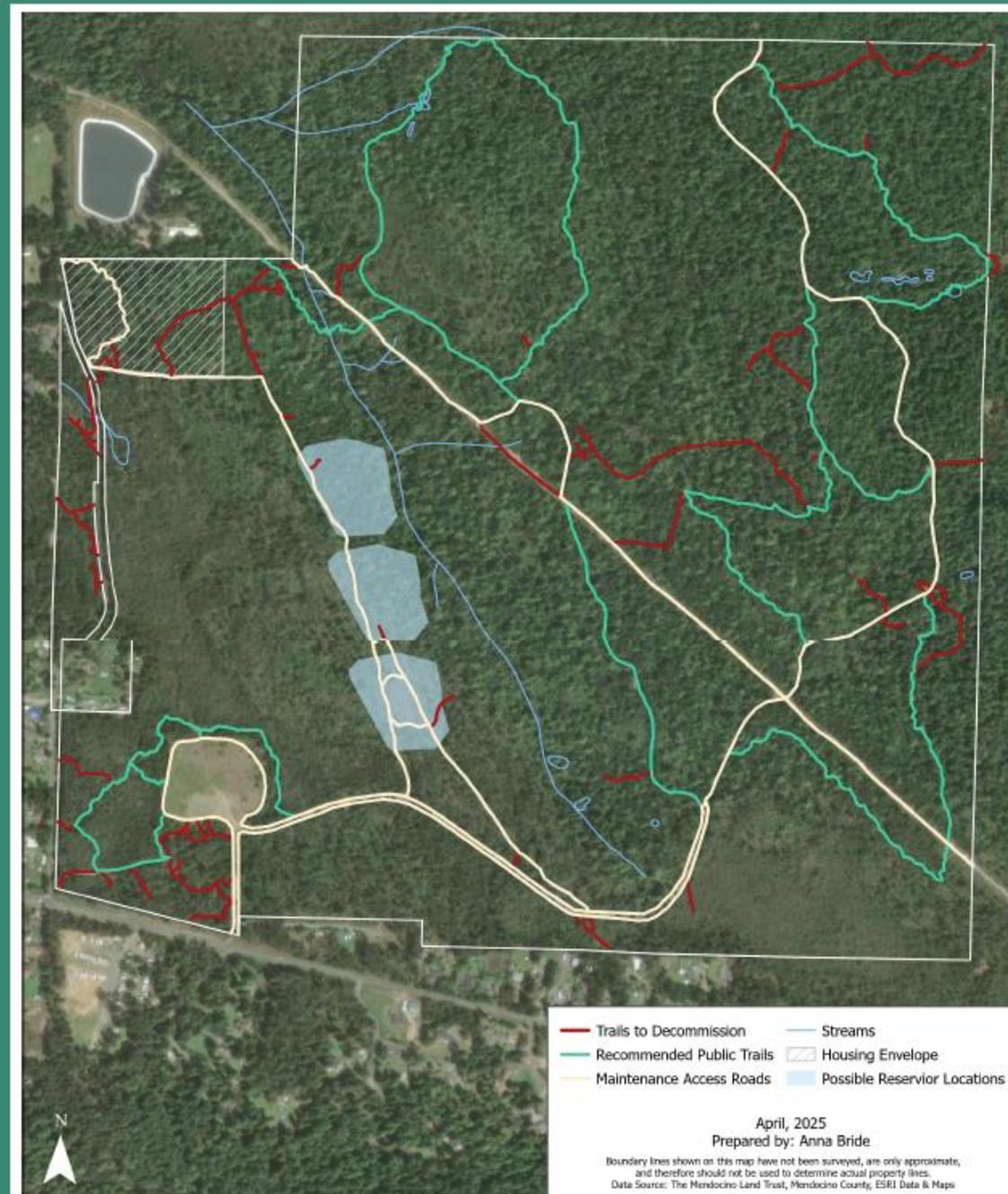


Locations selected to:

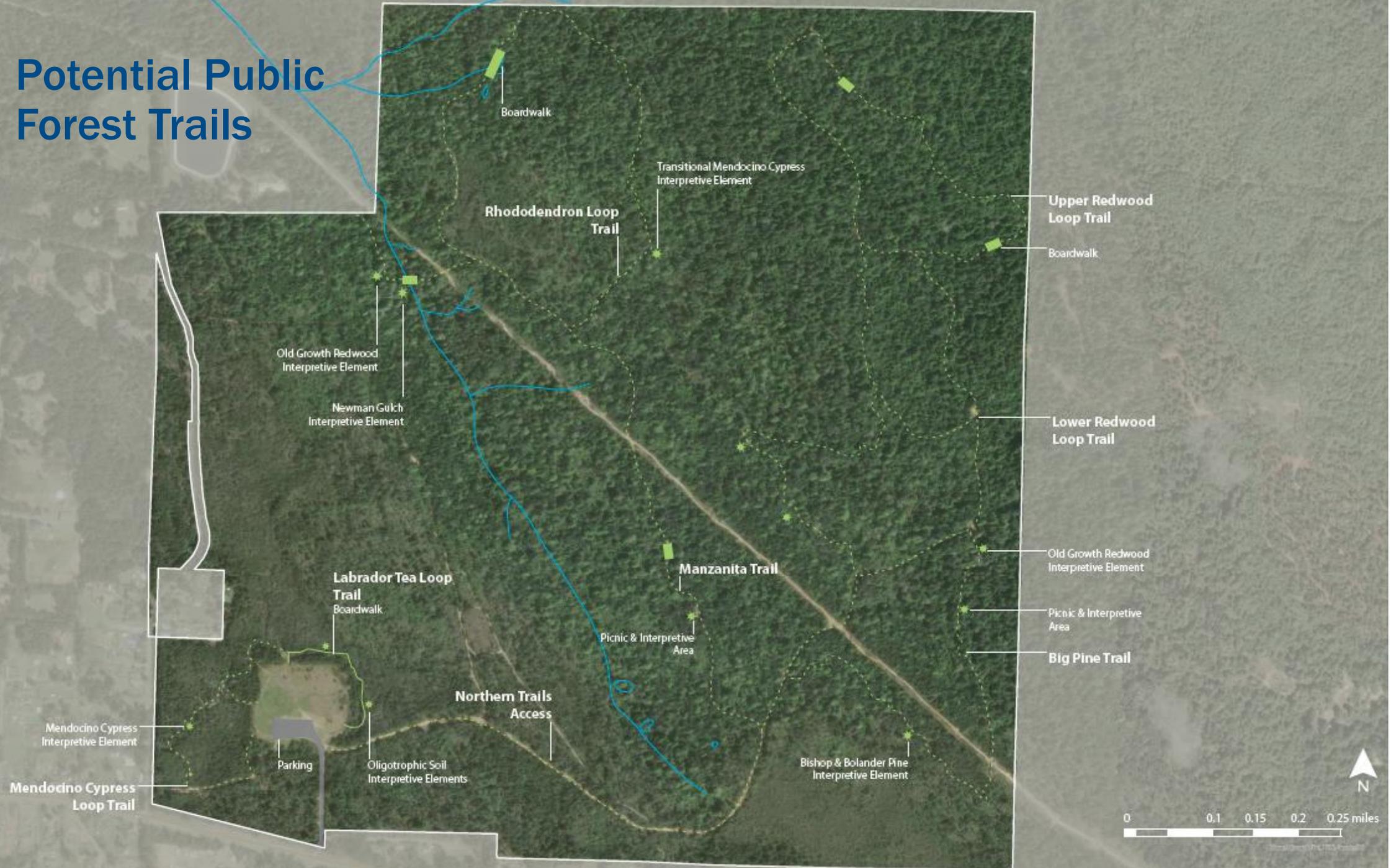
- Minimize impact to special status plants
- Minimize soil disturbance area
- Minimize capture of stormwater runoff

Recreation Considerations

- The property consists of rare and sensitive Mendocino Cypress Woodland habitat, commonly known as pygmy forest, which is subject to special protection due to its imperiled status. The unique soil in this ecosystem type cannot recover once disturbed.
- Decommissioning social trails and informal access areas limits harm to habitats.
- Using already disturbed areas for possible future public trails to limit any further disturbance.



Potential Public Forest Trails



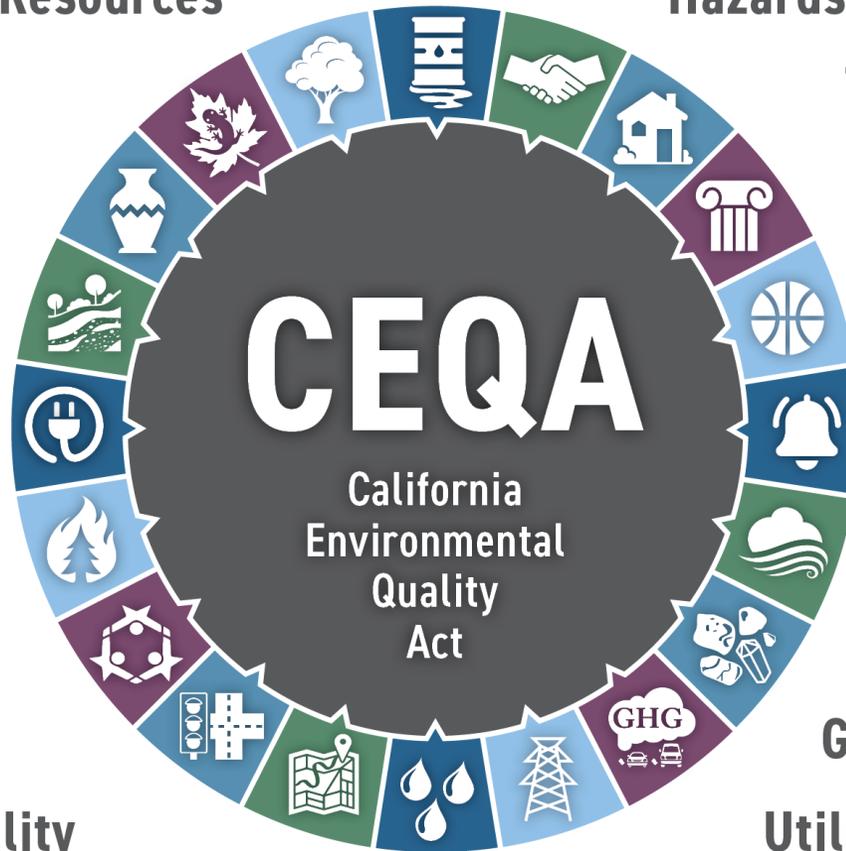


What is CEQA?

CEQA: California Environmental Quality Act

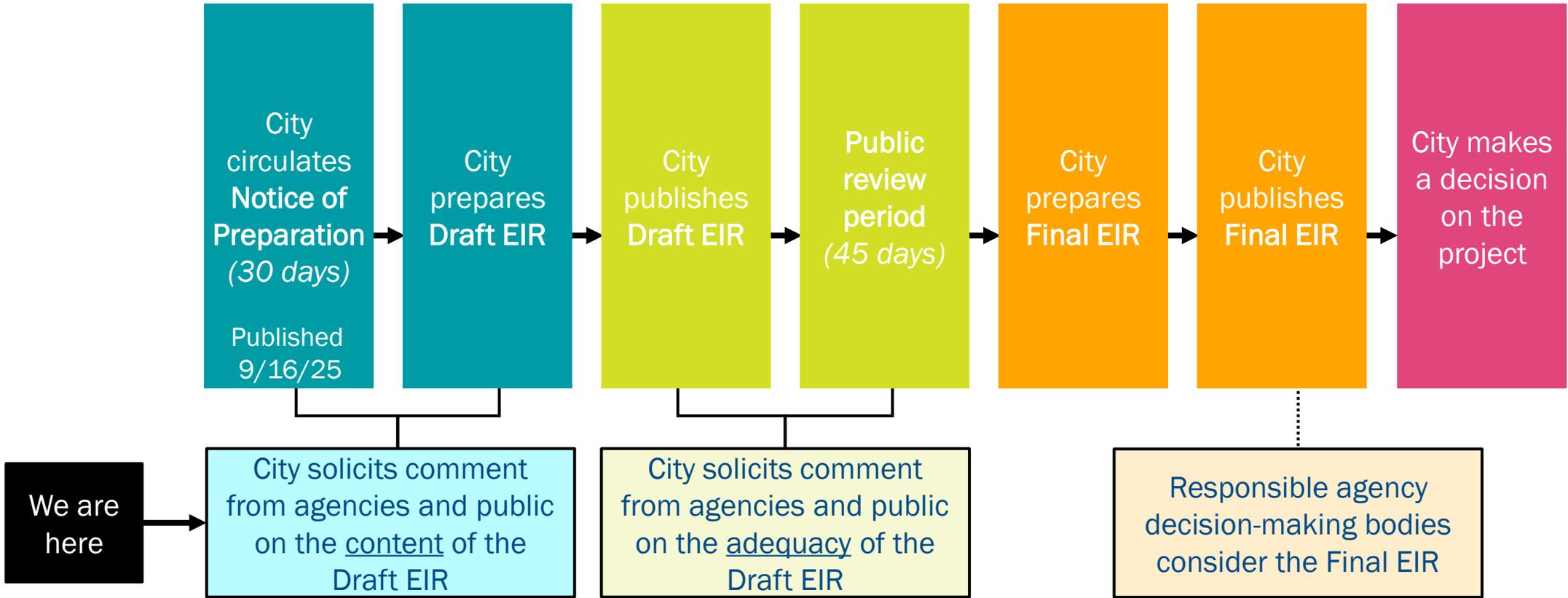
- CEQA is a public disclosure and input process
- Intended to inform government decisionmakers and the public about the potential environmental effects of proposed activities and to avoid/mitigate significant, avoidable environmental impacts

- Agriculture and Forestry Resources
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geology and Soils
- Energy
- Wildfire
- Public Services
- Transportation
- Land Use and Planning
- Hydrology and Water Quality



- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Tribal Cultural Resources
- Population and Housing
- Aesthetics/Visual
- Recreation
- Noise
- Air Quality
- Mineral Resources
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Utilities and Service Systems

EIR Process Flow



Project Timing

- Notice of Preparation/Scoping Meeting – *September 2025*
- Draft EIR/Public Hearing – *February 2026*
- Final EIR/City Council Approval – *July 2026*
- Final Engineering Design – *July 2026*
- Award Construction Contract – *October 2026*
- Start Construction – *Spring 2027*



CEQA Environmental Analysis

EIR Structure

- Introduction and Summary
- Project Description
- Setting, Impacts, and Mitigation
- Alternatives
- Other Impacts



Each topic area includes:

- Environmental Setting
- Potential Impacts
- Mitigation Measures (where potential significant impacts are identified)



Comments

How to Submit Comments

Deadline: **October 15, 2025**

- Physical address
 - City of Fort Bragg, Public Works Department
Attn: Diane O'Connor, Assistant City Engineer
416 North Franklin Street
Fort Bragg, California 95437
- Email address
 - doconnor@fortbraggca.gov
 - Subject Line: “Water Storage Reservoirs and Community Forest Project NOP”