



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

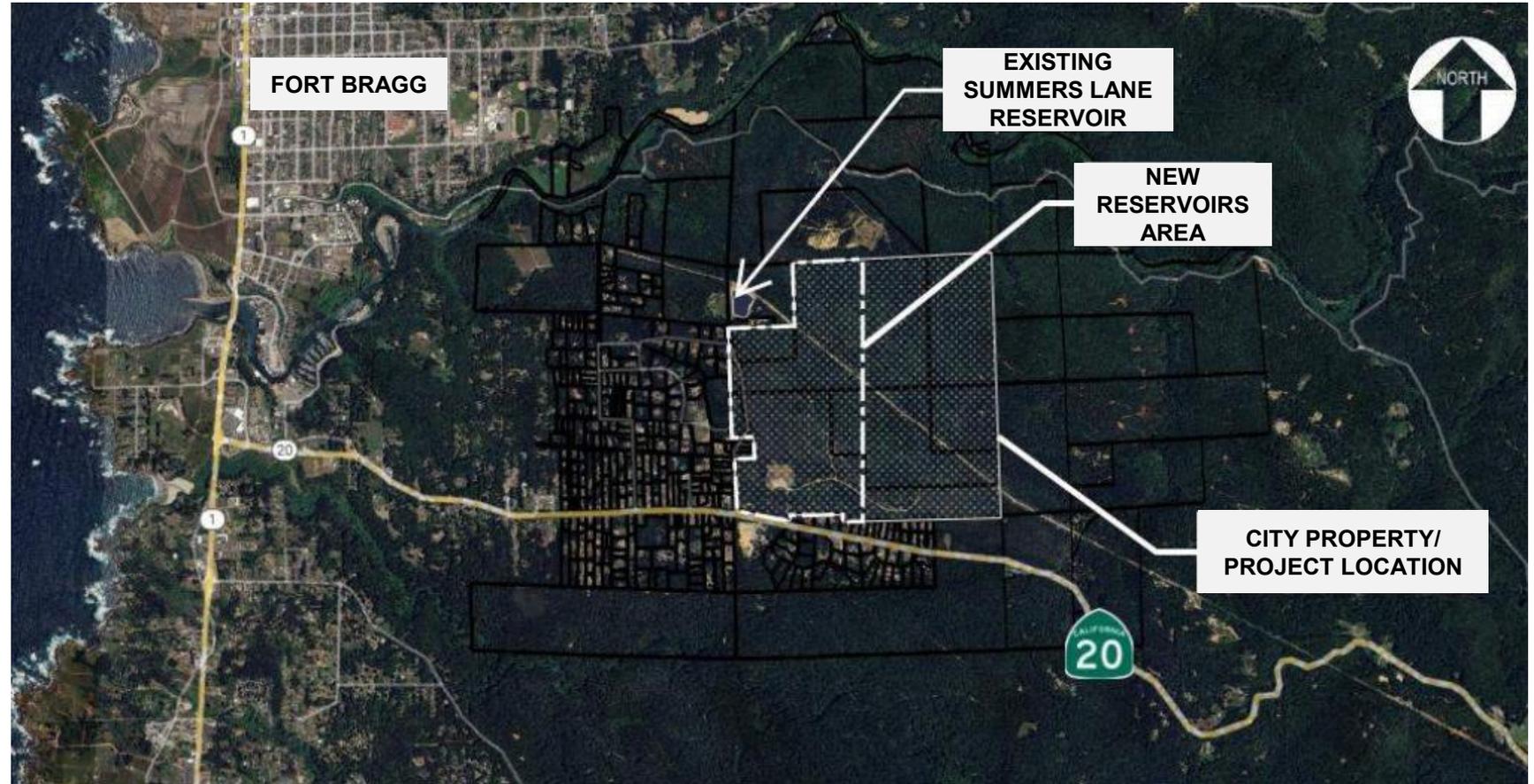




Project Background

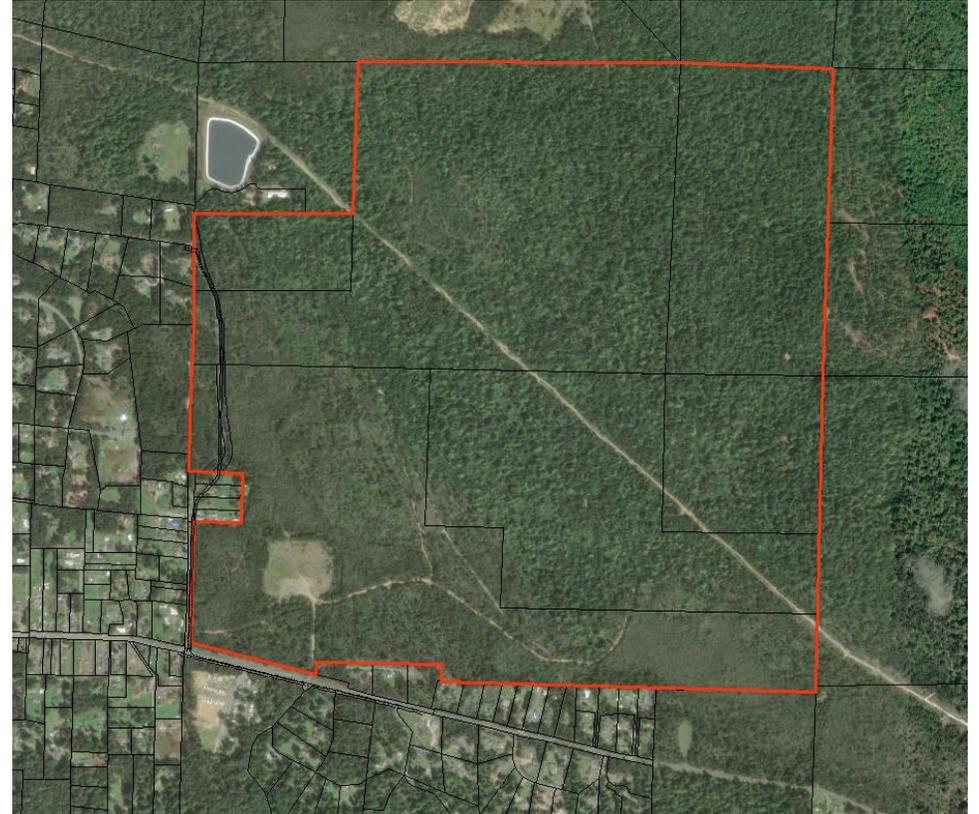
Project Location

- 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)



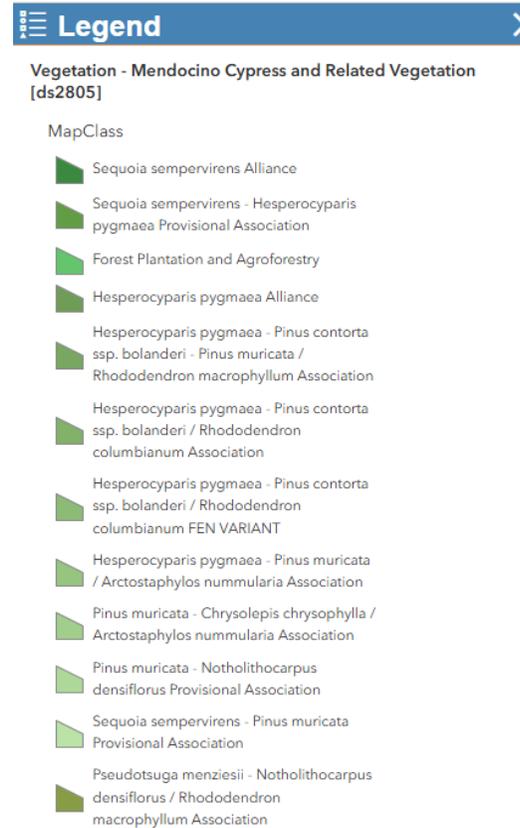
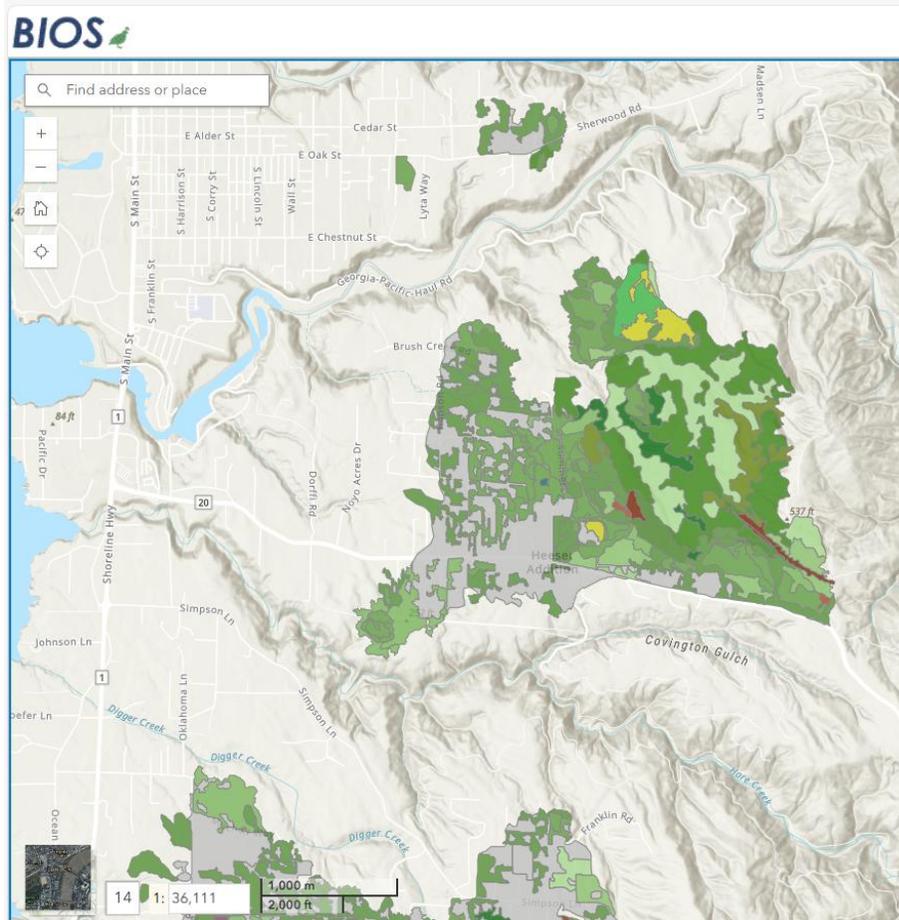
BIOS database



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>.

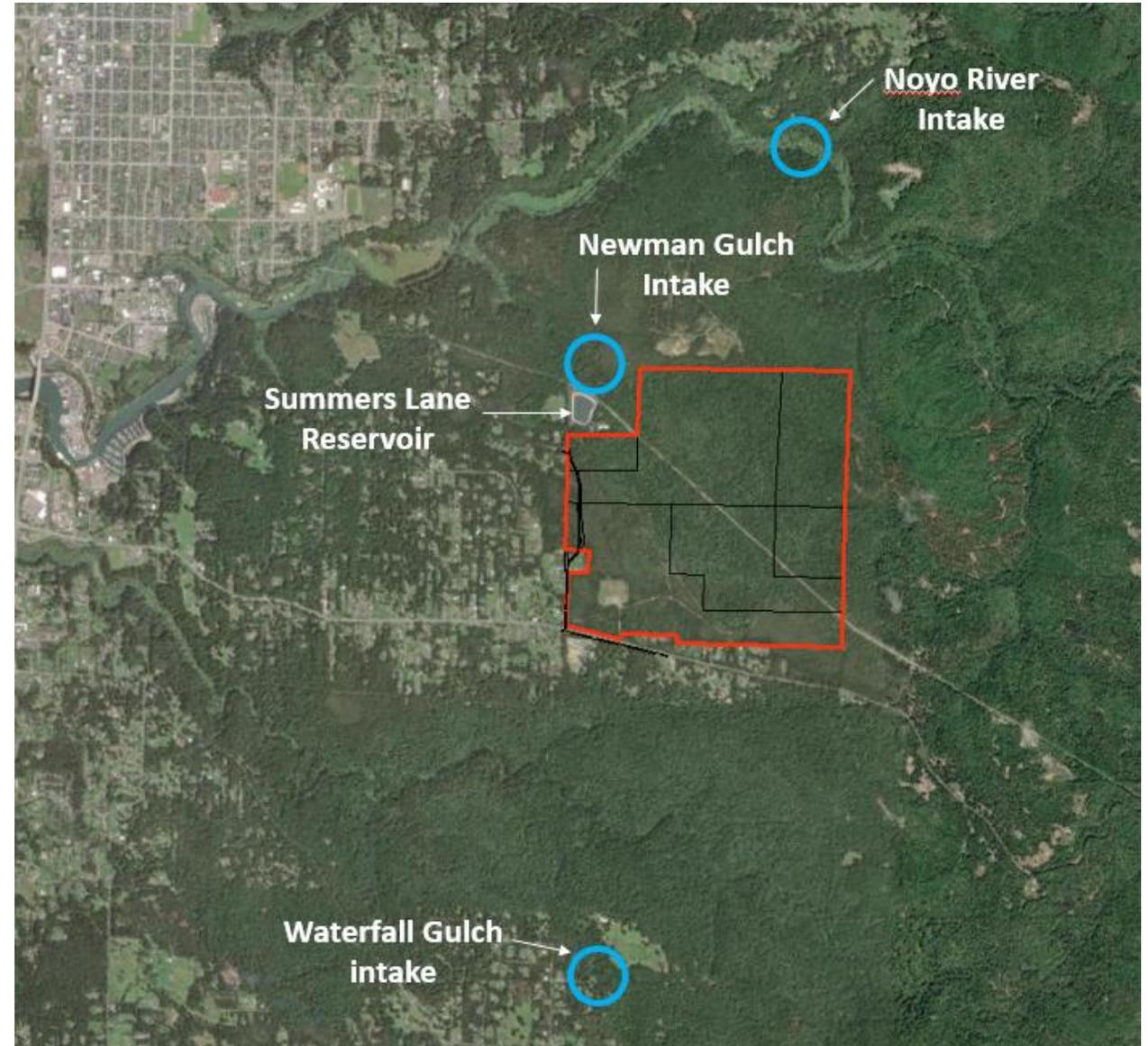
Mendocino Cypress Woodland Assoc.



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

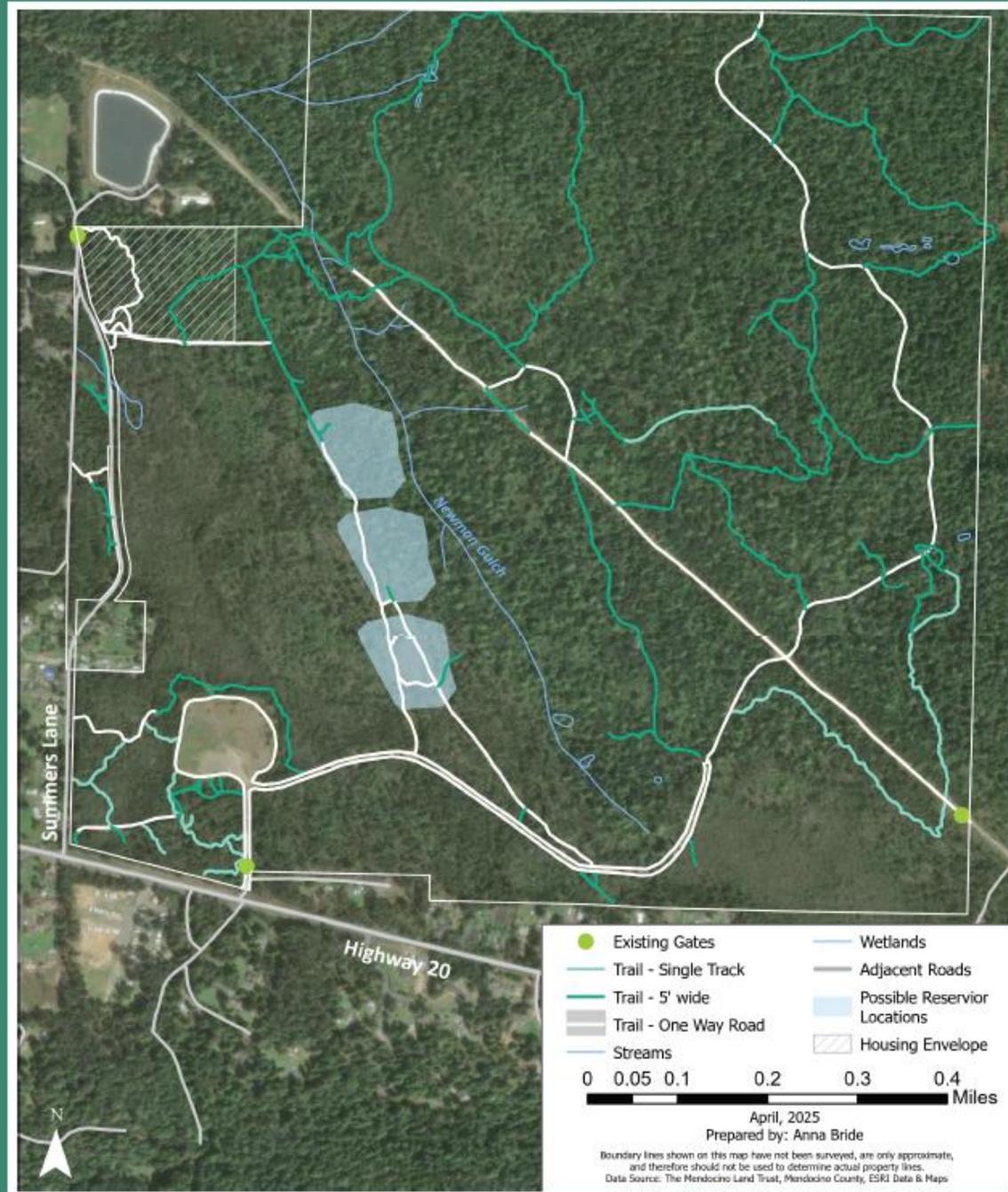
Existing Conditions

- 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

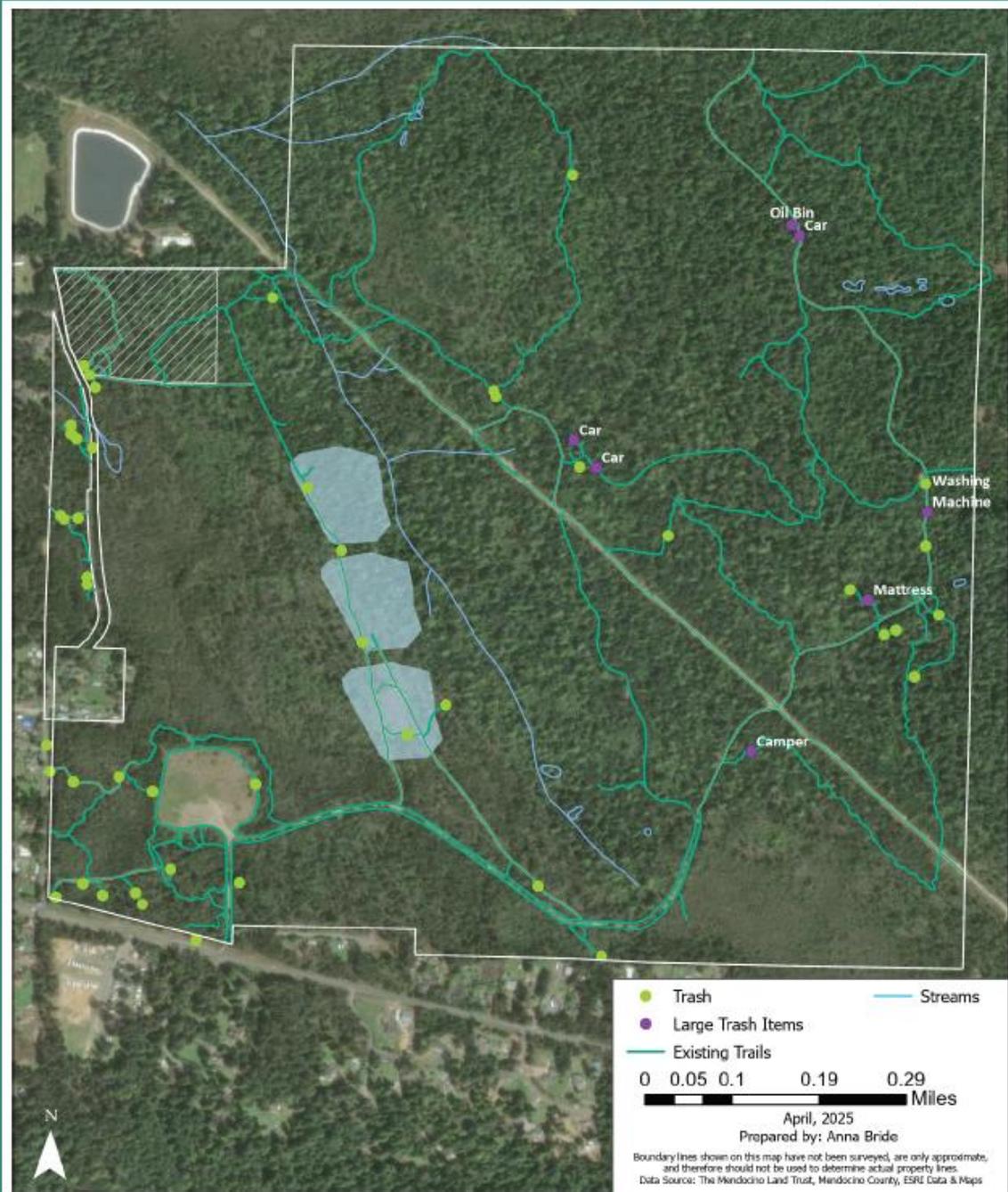


Existing Conditions

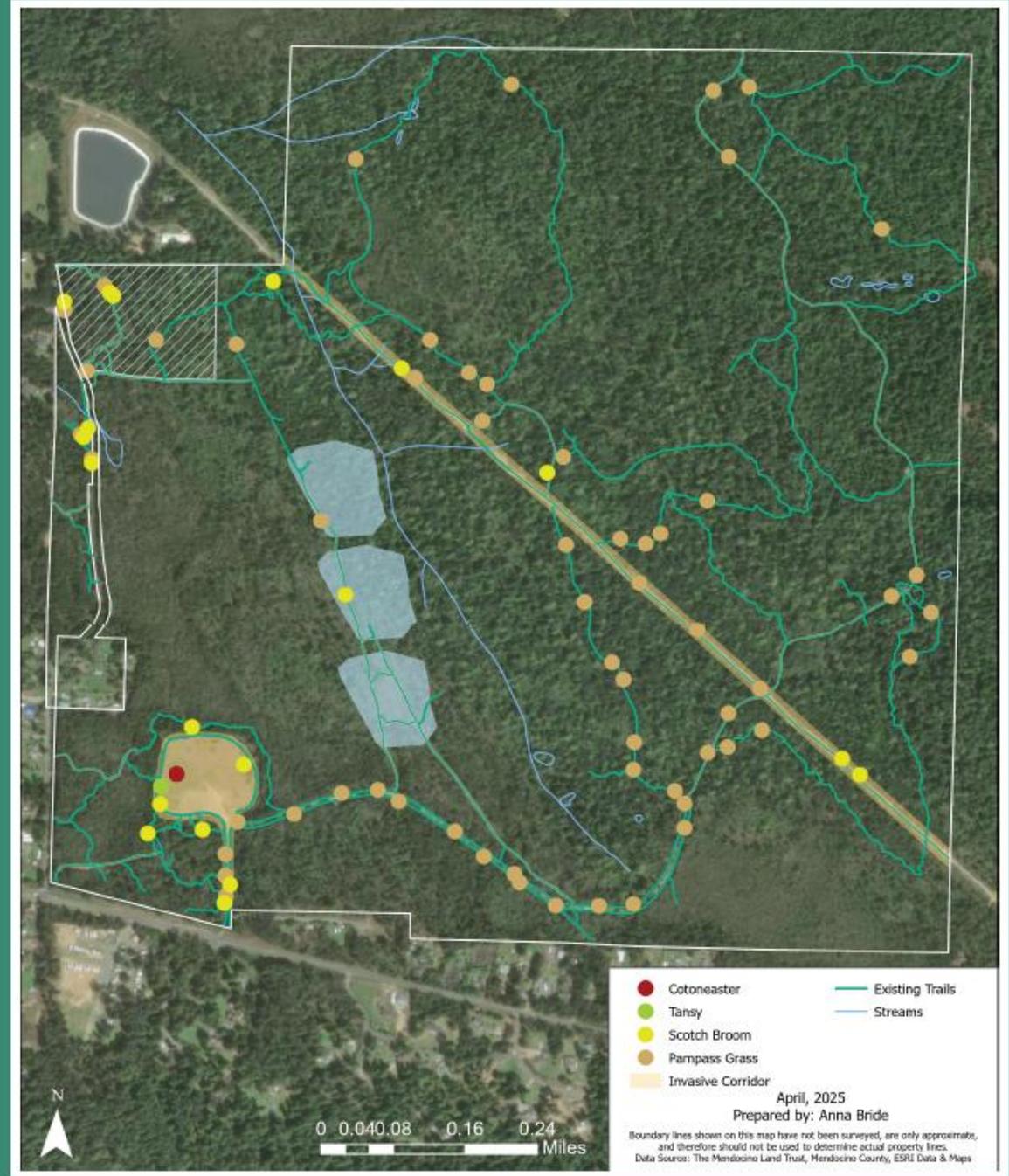
- Property inventory includes
 - Existing roads/trails
 - Trash & dumping areas
 - Invasive/Non-native species
 - Erosion/Flooding areas
 - Trespassing areas



Trash & Dumping Sites



Invasive Species Inventory





Proposed Project

Project Purpose

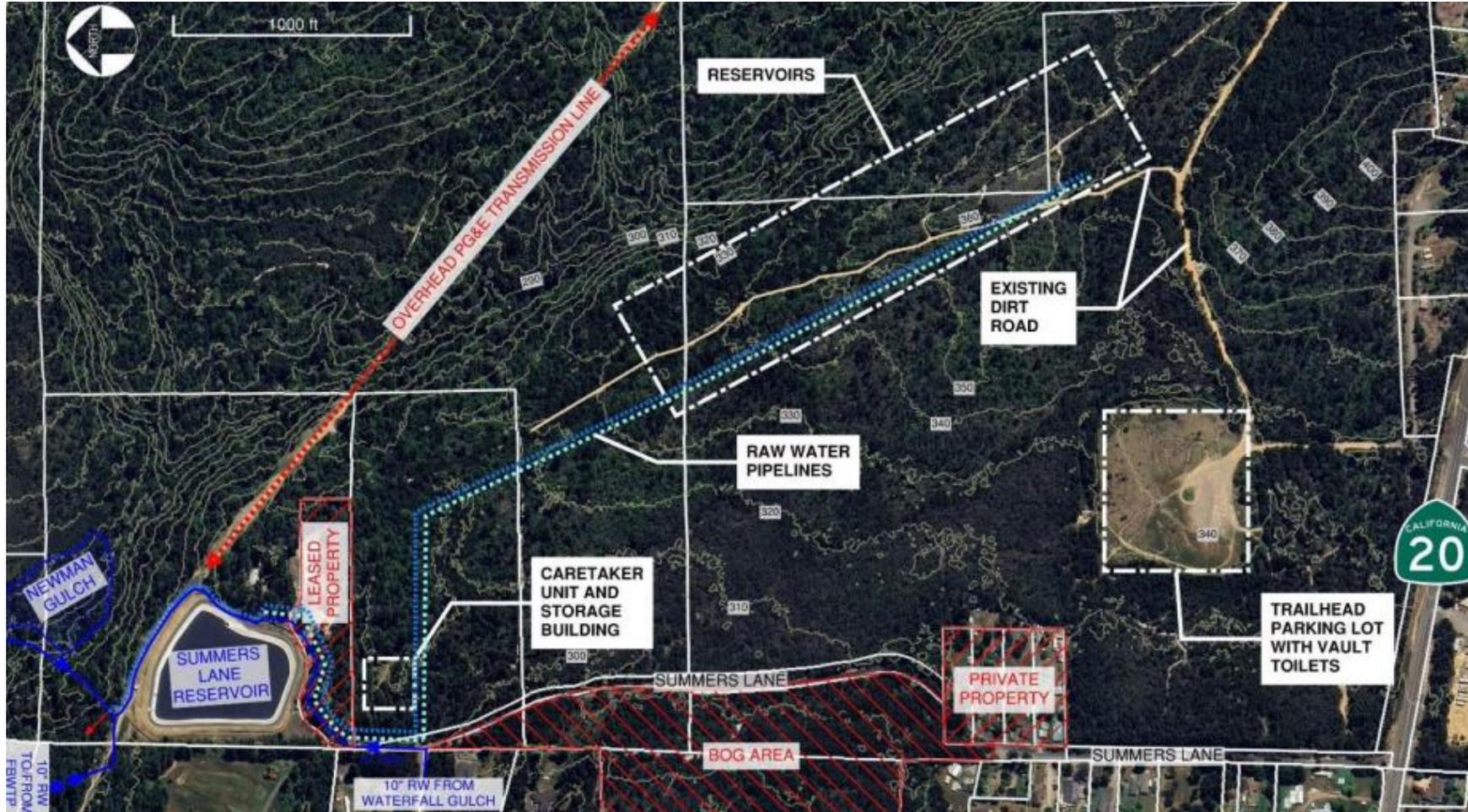
- Facilitate a reliable supply of water to residents during periods of drought
 - Provide raw water storage via three water reservoirs and associated infrastructure
 - Project will allow the City to fill the reservoirs from the Noyo River in winter when flows are high and draw from them in the summer 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

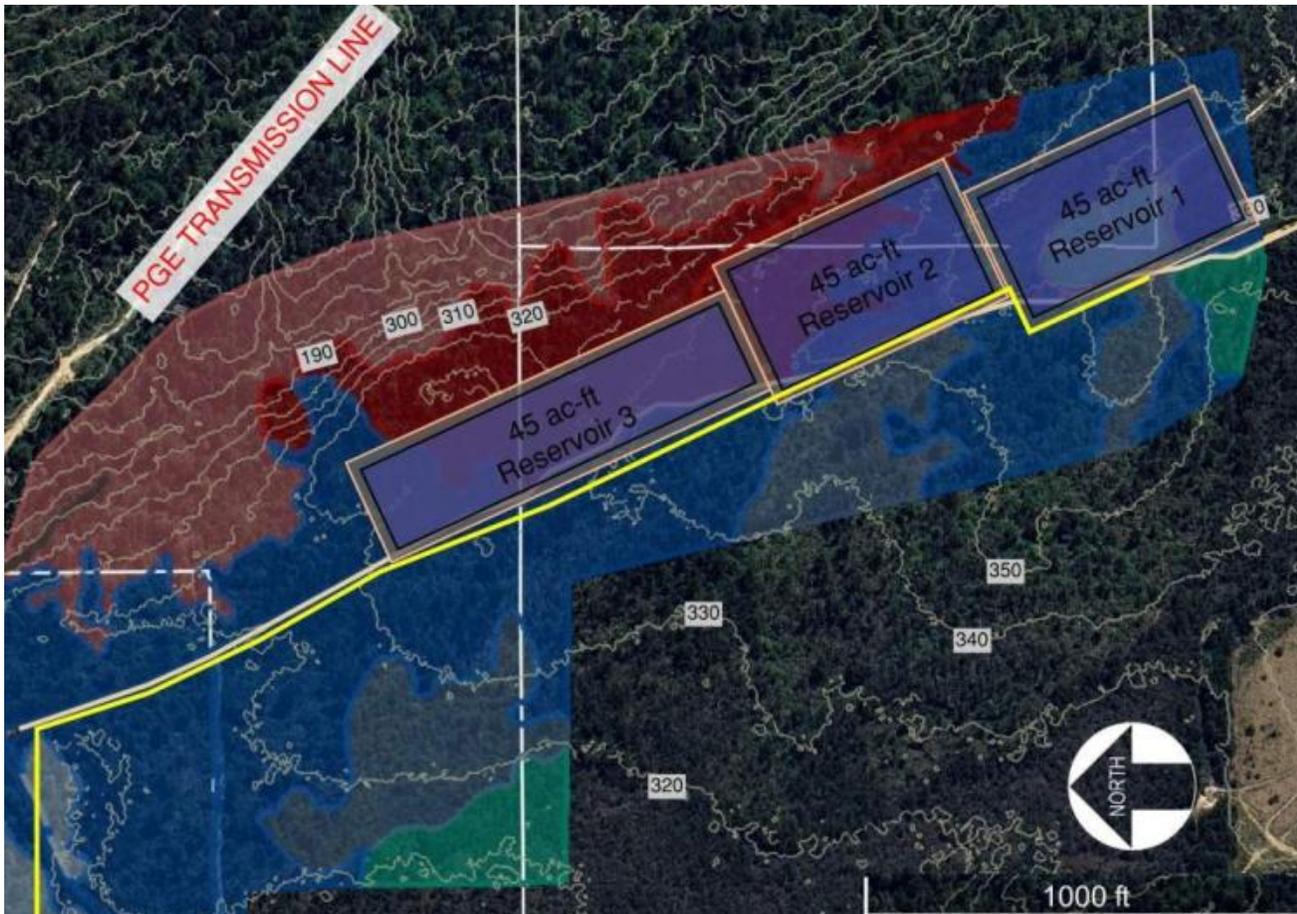
- Three water reservoirs (26.2-acre footprint of a total project area of 582 acres)
- Water transmission infrastructure (pipelines, etc.)
- Caretaker unit(s)
- Community forest
 - Parking lot and pit toilet
 - Trailhead and on-site trails

Conceptual Site Plan

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



Proposed Reservoir Layout

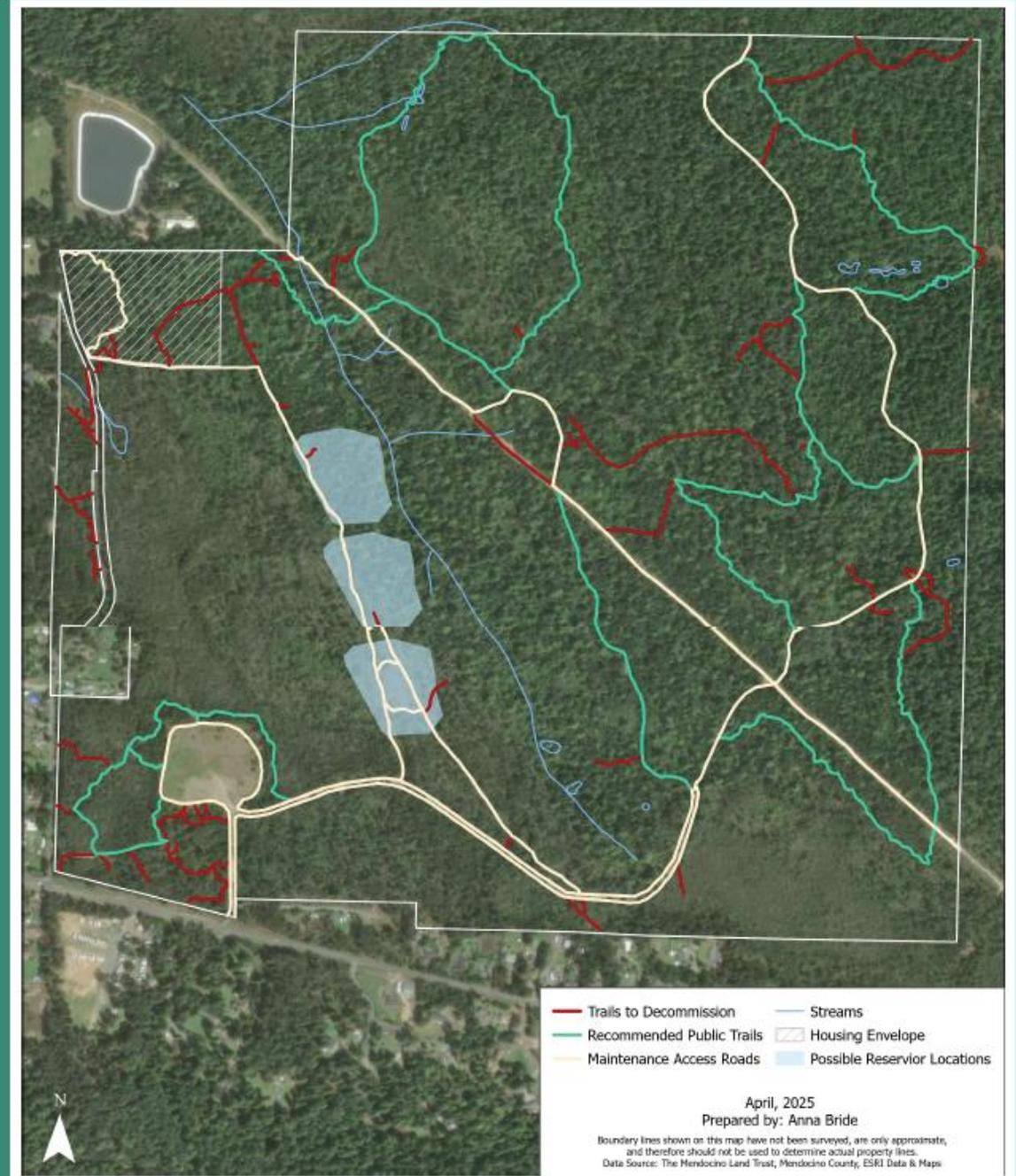


Locations selected to:

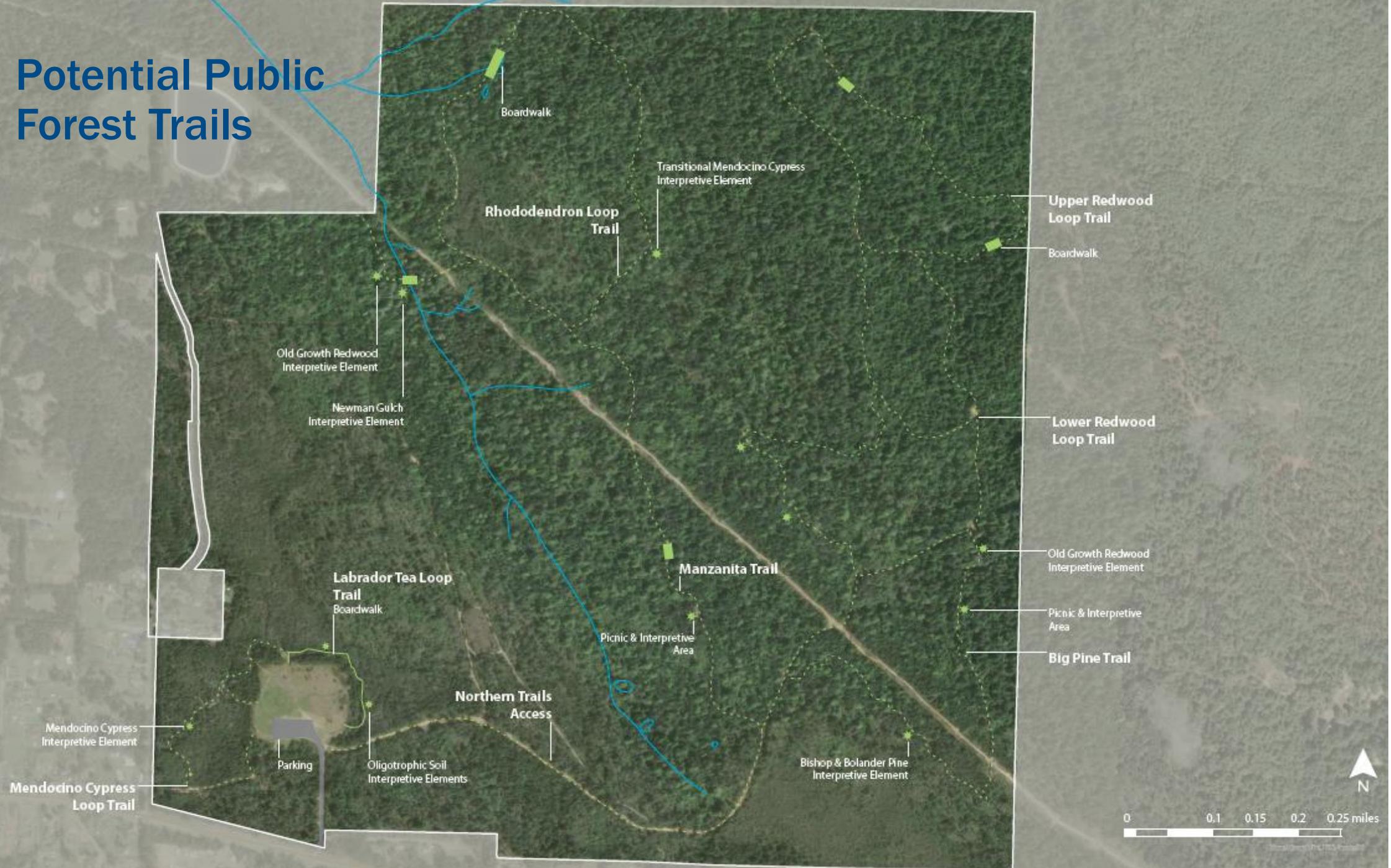
- Minimize impact to special status plants
- Minimize soil disturbance area
- Minimize capture of stormwater runoff

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



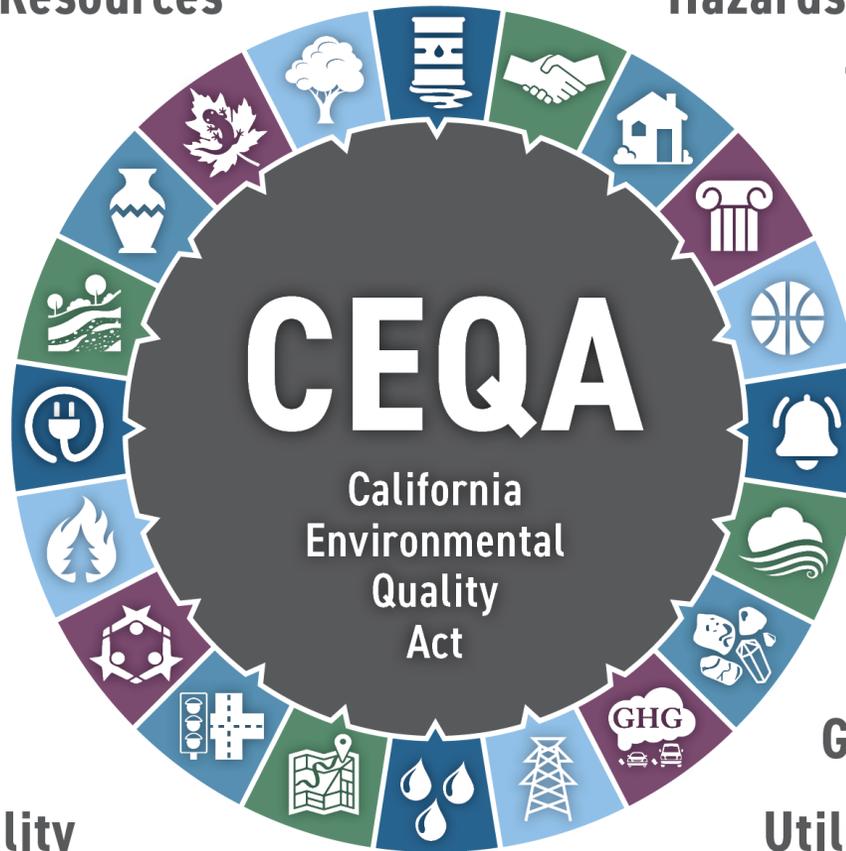


What is CEQA?

CEQA: California Environmental Quality Act

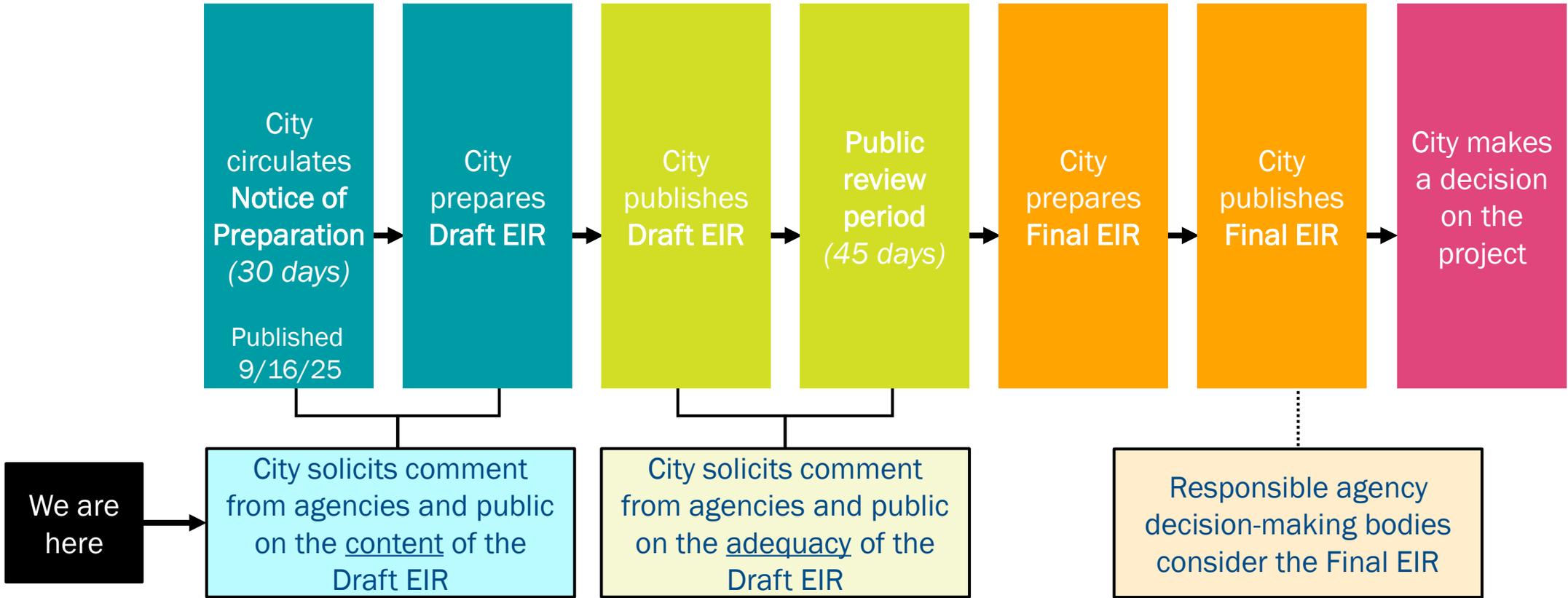
- CEQA is a public disclosure and input process
- Intended to inform government decisionmakers and the public about the potential environmental effects of proposed activities and to avoid/mitigate significant, avoidable environmental impacts

- 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”