



# Mendocino County Health & Human Services Agency

*Healthy People, Healthy Communities*

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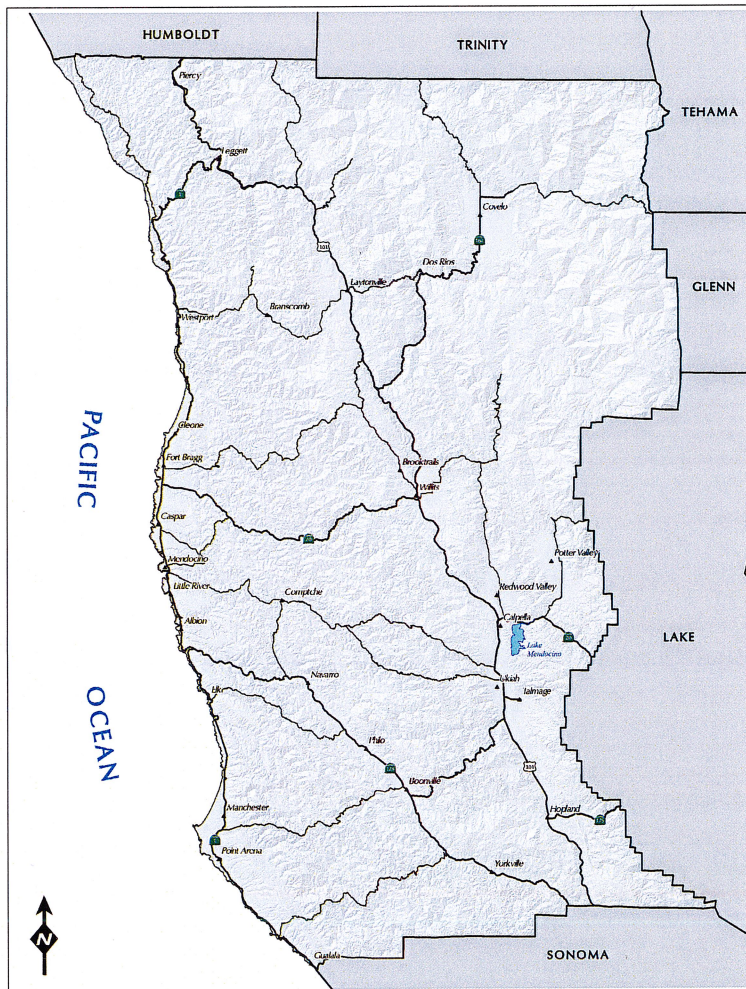
Environmental Health



## INTRODUCTION

This document represents the Local Agency Management Program (LAMP) relating to the Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems (OWTS) within the County of Mendocino, California. This LAMP has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) Water Quality Control Policy for Siting, Design, Operation, and Maintenance of Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems dated June 19, 2012. This policy describes tiers of OWTS management. Tier 2 describes the requirements for developing a LAMP which will become the standard by which authorized local agencies regulate OWTS. An approved LAMP is equivalent to a “Conditional Waiver of Waste Discharge Requirement” for OWTS within the local agency jurisdiction. This LAMP under Tier 2 provides an alternative method from Tier 1

programs while maintaining an equal level of protection of water quality and public health.



## GEOGRAPHICAL AREA

Mendocino County is located to the south of Humboldt County and to the north of Sonoma County. It also shares boundaries with Trinity, Tehama, Glenn, and Lake County. The county encompasses 3,506 square miles of land, 372 square miles of water, with a population of approximately 87,869. Fort Bragg, Willits and Ukiah are the three incorporated cities within Mendocino County. The City of Ukiah is the county seat as well as the largest of the cities. Mendocino County is

rugged, mountainous, and sparsely populated. The area is divided into inland and coastal valleys, separated by coastal ranges. The county is entirely within the North Coastal



Basin and the North Coast Hydrologic Region of the State. The average annual precipitation in this region ranges from 60" to 40".

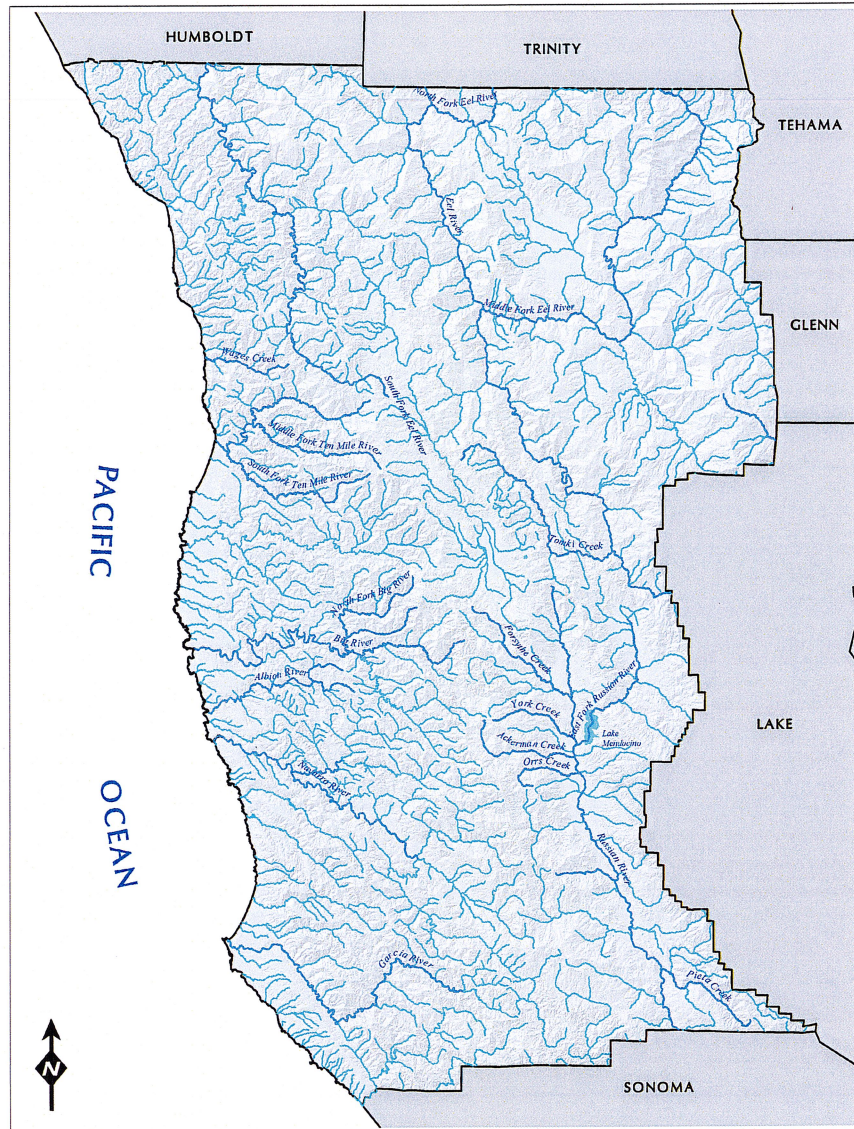
The topography, with tree-covered slopes and intermountain valleys, is not easily served by conventional on-site sewage technology. The lowest point in the basin, three hundred fifty (350) feet, is at the exit of the Russian and Eel Rivers. The highest point in the basin is Black Butte, located in Trinity County, which has an elevation of five thousand nine hundred twenty-two (5,922) feet. The isolation and limited density of development in many of

Mendocino County's rural area makes sizing and installation of on-site sewage systems difficult.

Most of the County consists of rugged, forested coastal mountains dissected by four major river systems: Eel, Russian, Navarro, Gualala rivers and numerous smaller river systems. Soils are generally unstable and erodible, and rainfall is high. The area along the eastern boundary of the County is mostly National Forest land

administered by the United States Forest Service.

The climate of Mendocino County varies from the coast to the interior. The inland area has warm, dry summers and cool wet winter. The Pacific Ocean moderates the temperatures on the coast. From October through April, ninety (90%) to ninety-five percent (95%) of the total annual precipitation in the area falls. Mean totals are as much as sixty (60) inches at the Russian River drainage, with forty-five (45) to seventy (70) inches at the Eel River drainage. Total are lowest in the southern valleys and highest in the northern mountains. Climate thus limits the time of year in which on-site sewage systems can be installed. It also necessitates percolation testing of expansive clay soils





during the wet weather season to ascertain performance of proposed on-site sewage systems.

Groundwater is the principal source of domestic water supply. Groundwater basins have been identified by DWR: Ten Mile River, Branscomb Town Area, Little Valley, Fort Bragg Terrace Area, Big River Valley, Navarro River Valley, Anderson Valley, Laytonville Valley, Sherwood Valley, Round Valley, Gualala River Valley, and Annapolis Ohlson Ranch Formation Highlands.

Surface water storage in the Russian River hydrologic unit includes Lake Mendocino, which stores imported Eel River water and East Fork Russian River water. Lake Mendocino is formed by Coyote Dam and has a maximum storage capacity of 122,500 acre-feet with 70,000 acre-feet allocated to water supply. Coyote Dam at Lake Mendocino supports two power generation units with a combined capacity of 3.5 megawatts. The only major surface water development in the Eel River hydrologic unit is Lake Pillsbury, which is formed by Scott Dam, with a storage capacity of 80,700 acre-feet. This facility, in conjunction with Van Arsdale Dam and the Potter Valley Tunnel, provides for power and export of Eel River water to the Russian River unit. The City of Willits obtains its water supply from the 723 acre-feet capacity Morris Reservoir and the 635 acre-feet capacity Centennial Reservoir, both located on James Creek.

## REGULATION OF OWTS & PUBLIC EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

The Mendocino County Health and Human Services Agency Public Health Branch Division of Environmental Health is responsible for regulating the OWTS throughout the unincorporated areas of the County. The Division of Environmental Health also regulates the OWTS within the cities under agreements with each city. The Division of Environmental Health operates its OWTS program under the authority granted by the North Coast Region Water Quality Control Board.

The Mendocino County LAMP includes an education and outreach program to assist homeowners with understanding and maintaining their OWTS. An operations and maintenance manuals are required for all alternative systems. These systems shall be inspected by either the County or a qualified service provider as per their maintenance manual. All monitoring and maintenance provided shall be documented and reported to the County on an annual basis. Additionally the County will continue to work closely with the North Coast Region Water Quality Control Board to educate the community about septic systems and the need to protect the surface and groundwater resources of Mendocino County.

This LAMP consists of the Tier 2 policy requirements, an OWTS Manual, and section 16.08 of the Mendocino County Code. This LAMP is intended to meet or exceed the intent of the Tier 1 policy put forth by the State by providing a regulatory framework that protects public health, the environment, and groundwater resources to the greatest practical extent possible.

If at any time Mendocino County wishes to withdraw its approved Tier 2 LAMP the County shall do so upon 60 days written notice. The notice shall specify the reason for withdrawal, the effective date for cessation, and the resumption of permitting of the OWTS under Tiers 1 and Tier 4 only.