

March 21, 2019

To: Ms. Juliana Cherry
Mendocino County Dept. of Planning and Building

Re: Case # CDP_2018-0016

From: Don and Lyn Booth
26801 N. Hwy. 1, Ft. Bragg, CA 95437
lynbluewaves@gmail.com

Dear Ms. Cherry,

As nearby property owners, we have become aware that the Edwards' property at 26921 N. Hwy. 1 has been topographically altered to non-conform to our natural environs. Our area of Inglenook is heavily wooded with native redwoods, firs, manzanita, etc., with intermittent meadows. The parcels in this area are bordered to the east by an extensive timberland in which a rich variety of wildlife thrives. Residents enjoy watching the free passage of wildlife through our properties to find water, food and shelter (though black bears and mountain lions can cause us to alert neighbors of their presence!). It is surprising and sad that a portion of the property in question has been cleared in such a way as to ignore the effects on these neighboring areas and animals.

We had met the previous owners of the property, Mr. and Mrs. Shozo Sato, who enjoyed showing us their beautiful gardens that were designed to look natural and had blended in with the surrounding shrubs and trees. It is sad to know this natural habitat has been erased through grading and tree removal, even though we do not pass by the property as some neighbors do every day.

We understand that Mr. Edwards, as a top administrator of the hospital, should know the importance of becoming informed of existing county codes and coastal regulations before proceeding with the extensive terrain alterations. It is evident that he has shown poor administration of his own property.

After reading details about this case, we noticed the following points made by the property owner:

- Mr. Edwards mentioned he has removed about 35 tan oaks that were dead or dying. While it is true that Sudden Oak Death has infected many tan oaks in this area, and it is good practice to remove infected ones to prevent the spread of the disease, it seems

highly unlikely all 35 trees could have been tan oaks. We have found the number of tan oaks around our larger 28-acre property, just 2 parcels away, to be much lower--they are sparsely found. Perhaps the removed trees included redwoods and other healthy trees, not just tan oaks.

- Mr. Edwards mentioned removal of charred stumps. We have several old burned-out redwood stumps on our property from about the 1940's that have grown secondary growth around them that provides great shelter for the animals for camouflage and a protected space from stormy conditions and predators. The stumps typically generate new redwood growth or huckleberry shrubs around them that hardly seem to be a significant fire threat, as was claimed by Mr. Edwards.
- Going forward, Mr. Edwards mentions he plans to remove "a few redwood trees" to widen a road easement—it's nebulous what "a few" will be. His utility easement plan will "continue to clear trees, and sometimes bushes", which sounds open-ended as to what extent. Perhaps it would be possible to leave some of the trees, perhaps not.
- The plan includes the intent to "replant trees", but what kind and where and how many is not mentioned.

In summary, we would like to see the County uphold a denial of further degradation of habitat on the property in question beyond necessary easement work required for fire and utility purposes. Past callous disregard for the natural surroundings shown by the property owner suggests he may not follow the procedures he has outlined to remedy further damage. The scale of any further vegetation removal doesn't seem to comply with the existing neighboring environment.