

Mendocino County Climate Action Advisory Committee
Friday January 15, 3:00 - 5:00
Via ZOOM
Meeting Agenda

Topic: **Climate Action Committee Meeting**

Time: **Jan 15, 2021 03:00 PM Pacific Time (US and Canada)**

Join Zoom Meeting

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Meeting ID: 861 2658 4624

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1. Call to Order and Roll Call
2. Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items
3. Climate Action Committee Introductions, Review of Agenda, and Consider Approval of Minutes from the December 11th 2020 MCCAC. (Attachment 1)
4. Run through of Committee presentation to the Board of Supervisors
 1. Introduction (4 minutes): Marie Jones will do the introduction, and Randy MacDonald will provide a presentation on the latest in climate change.
 2. Baseline Study (5 minutes): John Nickerson to present
 3. First Policy Recommendations (5-10 minutes): Michael Potts to present
 4. Grant writing (5 minutes) - Marie Jones to present
5. Receive Report and Consider Approval of Comment Letters from the Climate Action Committee re: Cannabis Ordinance and Oak Woodlands Ordinance. (Elen Drell & Tess Albin-Smith) (Attachments 2 and 3)
6. Receive Report and Consider Adoption of a Resolution Regarding the East Caspar, Simpson Lane and Woodlands Timber Harvest Plans (Marie Jones). (Attachment 4)
7. Discuss our Ukiah General Plan Amendment Strategy (group)
8. Consider Identification of a Meeting Date for February.
9. Adjournment

Mendocino County Climate Action Advisory Committee
Friday December 11, 2020 from 3pm - 5pm

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

- **Present:** Cathy Monroe, Marie Jones, Michael Potts, Shai Larsen, Susan Sher, Tess Albin-Smith, Ellen Drell, Randy MacDonald (*new member*)
- **Absent:** Jennifer Mayne (*resigned*), John Nickerson, Javier Silva, Mac Lojowsky, Raul Gardea

II. Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items

- Members of the public on the call: Eileen Mitro & Michael A'Dair
- Lana Cohen representing KZYX
- Cathy Monroe inquired about the City of Ukiah's General Plan update and how that is addressing climate issues, and Marie Jones and the committee reviewed how jurisdictions use General Plans and Zoning Ordinances.
- **ACTION:** Add General Plan, Housing and Transportation Element discussion to the January agenda.

III. Climate Action Committee Introductions, Review of Agenda, and Consider Approval of Minutes from the October 18th MCCAC.

- A motion was made by Tess Albin-Smith and seconded by Cathy Monroe to approve the October 18, 2020 Meeting Minutes as written. The minutes of the October 18, 2020 MCCAC meeting were approved unanimously.
- **ACTION:** Shai Larsen to send minutes to the committee once complete.

IV. Discussion of Strategy for the Committee Presentation to the Board of Supervisors

- Suggested Agenda for a 15 minute presentation plus time for feedback and questions:
 1. Introduction (X minutes): Marie Jones will do the introduction, and Randy MacDonald will provide a presentation on the latest in climate change.
 2. Baseline Study (5 minutes): John Nickerson to present
 - NOTE: Randy would like to include solid waste in this analysis.
 - **ACTION:** Cathy to connect with John regarding this assignment as well as providing the committee with a visual on what we're working on to help us refocus.
 3. First Policy Recommendations (5-10 minutes): Michael Potts to present
 - Michael will present a condensed version of the document and will refer to the website.
 4. Grant writing (5 minutes) - Marie Jones to present

5. Feedback & questions.

- ACTION: Marie to put together a rough agenda for the meeting and send it around.
- Tess Albin-Smith discussed the MCOG and charging stations. Lana Cohen mentioned that the Board of Supervisors discussed this issue at their last meeting (reference: 06.29 minutes from the BOS meeting).
- Randy MacDonald suggested raising the issue of County staff support during the meeting as well as support for MCCAAC members meeting with Directors of specific departments.

V. Discuss Comment Letters from the Climate Action Committee re: Cannabis Ordinance, Oak Woodlands Ordinance, East Caspar, Simpson Lane and Woodlands Timber Harvest Plans and Provide Direction to the Chair (Action)

- Cannabis Ordinance (Ellen Drell): ACTION: Ellen to put together a draft letter to circulate to committee members. Marie expressed a preference for outdoor growing and urged us to take a stance of discouraging large indoor grows. Reminder to members of the committee to only email Ellen back to comply with the Brown Act.
- Oak Woodlands Ordinance (Tess Albin-Smith): Tess discussed the need for the County to look at the oak woodlands and how to protect them. ACTION: Tess to draft and circulate a letter for general support, including input and language from Ellen, for us to adopt in our January meeting. Reminder to members of the committee to only email Tess back to comply with the Brown Act.
- East Caspar, Simpson Lane and Woodlands Timber Harvest Plans (Marie Jones): ACTION: Marie to draft and circulate a letter focusing on the issues of a) carbon sequestration and b) segmenting under CEQA. This letter will be addressed to CalFire, and will copy the Board of Supervisions, the Fort Bragg City Council, and Fish and Wildlife. Reminder to members of the committee to only email Marie back to comply with the Brown Act.
- Randy MacDonald suggested the committee take positions in concert with allies such as the Sierra Club on areas of mutual interest and mission, such as carbon sequestration.

VI. Discuss Community Outreach

- Cathy Monroe discussed a MCCAAC website that's friendly for the public.
- Randy MacDonald suggested utilizing emails (via Mailchimp) to announce what we're doing and encourage participation.
- Eileen Mitro offered that Climate Action Mendocino has 300 people on their list. Could they sign our letters?

- ACTION: Randy to reach out to Walter and Elisha to attain the lists of participants and send the list to Marie.
- Group discussed putting posters around; Outreach Committee can address this.

VII. Discuss Designating the Ukiah based Climate Action Group

- Cathy Monroe, Eileen Mitro and Margot Frank have been spearheading this group.
- Committee explored ways to tangibly knit together our alliances. Randy MacDonald suggested looking to our individual networks to endorse the first policy recommendations document publically or with a letter.
- Eileen Mitro suggested including an option on mccaac.org to make it possible to endorse the first policy recommendations document.
- ACTION: Michael Potts to add this feature to the mccaac.org website.
- ACTION: Each committee member to seek letters of endorsement from allies, climate and other.

VIII. Consider Identification of a Meeting Date for January (Action)

- Our next meeting will take place on January 15 @ 3pm PT.
- Agenda items to include:
 - General Plan Update
 - Dry Run in preparation for the February Meeting
 - Review of the three comment letters

IX. Adjournment (Action)

- Reading / viewing commendations:
 - Secretary General of the United Nation's powerful climate address (includes a long list of policy recommendations)
 - Book: The Overstory
- Meeting adjourned @ 4:37pm.

Date....

From: MCCAAC

TO: Mendocino County Board of Supervisors
501 Low Gap Rd.
Ukiah, CA 95482
bos@mendocinocounty.org

Re: The Mendocino County Cannabis Cultivation Ordinance and Climate Change

Dear Chair Gjerde and Members of the Board;

The MCCAAC would like to draw your attention to the potential consequences, both positive and negative, of the County's cannabis cultivation program on the three county-wide goals of the MCCAAC - reduce GHG emissions, increase carbon storage capacity in the County, and prepare to better cope with the economic and environmental impacts of climate change processes already underway.

Land use decisions relative to the cannabis industry have a significant effect on all three of these goals. The legal cannabis industry provides a powerful impetus for infrastructure development wherever this activity is allowed. These impacts extend far beyond the actual cultivation area itself. Depending on the location, there could be a need for road improvement and/or new road construction; development of water source and irrigation delivery systems; clearing and grading for construction of associated structures including buildings for storing and processing. Depending on the size of the operation, there could be a need for employee housing and other employee facilities. There will be impacts from vegetation clearing for improved access and fire protection; impacts from the introduction of artificial soils, fertilizers, pesticides, and plastics for ground covers, planting containers and hoop houses. If not already connected to an existing power grid, there will be a need for power generation either through an extension of the grid or from some other source. There will be a need for proper waste collection and disposal; and a need for public services such as routine and regular inspections, convenient waste disposal facilities, law enforcement and fire protection, and depending on the location, protection from wildfires.

The same resource conservation and climate action principles that promote in-fill development in urban areas apply equally to this new economic enterprise. For this reason we strongly support the existing cannabis cultivation Ordinance's prohibition on new commercial cannabis operations into the County's resources lands, including the County's rangeland zoning district (RL). We also support the existing Ordinance's underlying long term goal of directing new commercial cannabis cultivation to areas of the County already developed with roads, electricity, existing water sources, and other human impacts, i.e. RR-10, UR, Ag, Commercial and Industrial zones. We support the Ordinance's goal of re-directing new cannabis cultivation into Ag zoning districts with the caveat that cultivation practices do not displace food and fiber production or degrade the food and fiber productivity of agricultural soils and water sources through the use of quasi-industrial production practices such as the use of ground coverings using plastic, aggregate

or other similar materials, permanent indoor grow facilities on concrete pads, etc. common to many cannabis cultivation operations. These types of operations should be restricted to Commercial or Industrial zones.

In addition, we strongly oppose recent efforts to open the County's entire 700,000 + acres of RL to new commercial cannabis operations either by amending the existing Ordinance, or more recently, by writing an entirely new Ordinance that would open the RL districts to new cannabis cultivation. The MCCAAC recognizes that there may be legitimate exceptions to the existing zoning limitations, but we recommend that such situations be considered on an individual basis and that site-specific remedies be sought, if warranted, rather than weakening the strong environmental and climate protections of the existing Ordinance.

By not fueling a new wave of remote rural development, the existing Ordinance has the potential to further the mission of the MCCAAC by preserving the carbon storage capacity of County resource lands, including the County's rangeland's limited and critical water sources, and the carbon-holding capacity of its grasslands* and oak** and mixed forest woodlands. The existing Ordinance also avoids increasing GHG emissions through encoded land use decisions that result in fewer cannabis cultivation related vehicle miles travelled (VMT) for producers, distributors, inspectors, public service providers, employees, commercial deliveries, and travel to waste disposal facilities, (and fewer toxic garbage dumps throughout the County!). Finally, the zoning limitations of the existing Ordinance will not exacerbate the ability of the County to be prepared for and to cope with wildland fires. In contrast, encouraging more remote rural development would create more opportunities for human-caused wildfire ignition. It could hamper efforts to introduce controlled burning across wildfire-prone landscapes, and given CalFire's mandate to protect property from wildfire, would add to CalFire's and the public's burden to provide ever more funding and personnel in an effort to defend private property. Ironically, during this last fire season, as the Board was directing staff to work on a new draft ordinance that would open the County's RL to cannabis cultivation, the August Fire was burning across 2/3 of the rangelands of the 3rd District, and Covelo, Willits and Laytonville were bracing for an influx or surrounding evacuees. The MCCAAC urges the Board to recognize the inextricable relationship of land use decisions, climate change and public welfare.

The MCCAAC would also like to recommend amendments to the existing Ordinance that we think would further reduce GHG emissions from commercial cannabis operations and bring this new agricultural and industrial enterprise closer to being "carbon neutral", and in the case of in-the-ground, sun-grown farms, a potential sequester of carbon

1. Prohibit the use of generators as a primary source of power, and allow generators only as backup power during a defined emergency such as a temporary power outage. Revisit the Ordinance amendment that extended the generator "phase out" period (Section....) and shorten the time allowed for phasing out generators as a primary power source.
2. Prohibit the use of trucked-in water for cannabis cultivation or other cannabis cultivation-related water use. Not only do the water trucks emit significant GHG's as they rumble night and day to remote areas of the County, they are contributing to the rapid deterioration of both County and neighborhood-maintained roads.

3. Allow indoor cannabis operations, or “mixed light” operations, in Commercial and Industrial zones only, and require that all power use for indoor cultivation facilities be from renewable energy sources.***

Thank you for your attention to these recommendations.

Respectfully,

_____, Chair, MCCAAC

* Grasslands May be More Reliable Sinks than Forests in Calif., Pawlok, Dass et al, 2018, Environ. Res. Let., Vol. 13, Number 7.

* Carbon Sequestration in Grasslands, Minnesota Board of Water and Soil resources, 2019

** New York Times article, Science section, 12-3-12, by C. Claiborne Ry

*** (statistics estimating power use for indoor grow operation)

Dear _____

The County has conducted a series of workshops to develop an Oak Woodland Protection Ordinance, under Section 1. Chapter 20.248 of the Mendocino County Code.

The Mendocino County Climate Action Advisory Committee (MCCAAC) wholeheartedly agrees with the stated intent of the Oak Protections, which reads as follows:

It is the purpose and intent of this Chapter to protect oak woodlands and individual oak trees as sensitive and unique natural communities within the County of Mendocino. California native oak trees are a culturally integral part of the County of Mendocino identified in the General Plan as diverse habitats for wildlife. The goal of this Chapter retain and manage the oak resources of the County and provide adequate regulation sure perpetuity of oak trees and oak woodlands within Mendocino County.

MCCAAC would like to emphasize the urgency of adopting and enforcing this ordinance and applying it to every project on Oak Woodlands as soon as possible.

Please be aware that in the State of California there are NO legal protections of oaks except at the local level (city, county). The Dept. of Forestry and Fire Protection (Calfire)'s jurisdiction is commercial timberland. Fish and Wildlife and other state agencies only regulate habitat modification when permits require their input.

Following are four key reasons to move forward with protections as soon as possible.

1. Oak woodlands are THE most important habitat type for the most numbers of wildlife species. This is well-documented.
2. Any tree cover, especially oaks, is our most important natural mitigation tool to combat global warming. Carbon Sequestration is key to mitigation for Climate change, because trees create a carbon sink. California's iconic oak ecosystems have great capacity to store atmospheric carbon in tree biomass and soil.
3. Oak woodlands soils are among the most fragile soil types in terms of watershed stability... and there is no erosion control ordinance in Mendocino County to protect the integrity of Oak Woodlands from rangeland developments involving tree removal.

4. Oak trees create islands of enhanced fertility through organic matter incorporation and nutrient cycling. Compared to adjacent grasslands, soils beneath the oak canopy have a lower bulk density, higher pH, and greater concentrations of organic carbon, nitrogen, total and available P, and exchangeable Ca, Mg, and K, especially in the upper soil horizons. Removal of oak trees results in loss of soil fertility over a 10 to 20-year period.

Mendocino County has approximately 374,000 acres of oak woodlands according to Calfire. Oak woodlands are disappearing at an alarming rate in n highly populated areas of California due to urban sprawl -- we are actually adding to our carbon footprint. Rural oak woodlands are mostly privately owned rangelands utilized for ranching, which benefits from little or no legal protection.

More and more, the oak woodlands have been devastated by firewood harvests, disease, climate change, and conversion to vineyards, orchards, and residential development.

As stated before...there are no statewide protections for Oak Woodlands. It's under local control if any. Because there are so many good arguments to move forward, we encourage the county to adopt these rules to minimize cutting, burning, or land conversion, and to require erosion control plans for any land-use change proposed.

**DRAFT Resolution of the
Mendocino County Climate Action Advisory Committee
Official Comments on the Following Timber Harvest Plans:
Mitchell Creek THP 1-20-00193-MEN**

5 **Little North Fork Big River 1-20-00173-MEN**

(1) **WHEREAS**, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire) plans to harvest nearly five square miles of high quality second-growth forest on the Mendocino Coast in the next few years.

10 (4) **WHEREAS**, the 5,000+ acres slated for logging have some of the highest concentrations of large trees remaining in the state forest system, and most of these forests have not been logged in 50-100 years.

(10) **WHEREAS**, Redwood Trees are the best tree at sequestering Carbon, as they sequester more than 250 times the average tree during a typical tree lifetime. Additionally, older redwood trees sequester carbon at a much faster rate than young redwood trees as analyzed by Dryw and O'hara in their analysis "*Carbon Storage in Young Growth Coast Redwood Stands.*" This analysis found that older trees sequester
15 carbon at a fraction rate of 0.60g/cm³ verses 0.34g/cm³ in young redwood trees.

(11) **WHEREAS**, Jackson Demonstration State Forest is well positioned to help implement Governor Newsom's October 7, 2020 executive order that directs state policymakers to conserve 30% of the state's land and coastal water by 2030, in order to curb the loss of species and ecosystems. The Governor envisions carbon sequestration projects on farms and other landscapes as a major part of
20 preventing the climate crisis from worsening.

(12) **WHEREAS**, Jackson demonstration State Forest is an excellent location to demonstrate forest conservation and carbon sequestration.

(13) **WHEREAS**, Jackson State Demonstration Forest should seek to use the proposed THP areas to demonstrate carbon sequestration.

25 (7) **WHEREAS**, logging is one of the greatest contributors to climate change. A group of 200 forestry and climate scientists sent a letter to the US Congress last May, stating that:

30 "Logging in U.S. forests emits 617 million tons of CO₂ annually. Further, logging involves transportation of trucks and machinery across long distances between the forest and the mill. For every ton of carbon emitted from logging, an additional 17.2% (106 million tons of CO₂) is emitted from fossil fuel consumption to support transportation, extraction, and processing of wood. In fact, annual CO₂ emissions from logging in U.S. forests are comparable to yearly U.S. emissions from the residential and commercial sectors combined (EPA Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory). The cumulative climate change impact of logging in the U.S. is even higher, since logging causes substantial reductions in carbon sequestration and storage potential in
35 forests due to soil compaction and nutrient removal, and these combined impacts can often reduce forest carbon storage potential by 30% or more."

(8) **WHEREAS**, the Dec 2020, report by California Air Resources Board entitled: “Wildfire, Prescribed Fire, and Forest Management Activities” analyzed carbon flows in and out of all California’s forest lands. The report concludes that in the past 20 years there has been an average annual new net carbon outflow from forests totaling 10.9 MMT (Million Metric Tons) of carbon or about 39.24 MMT of carbon dioxide equivalent (MMTCO_{2e}). The is 9.2% of the total annual 2018 net emissions from GHG emitting activities statewide (425 million MMTCO_{2e}). Clearly forest practices (natural and manmade) play a significant role in our overall statewide contributions to climate change. See details below:

- 45 • **Forestry Process Outflows:** “The 2002–2019 average annual amount of carbon transformed by forest management (including prescribed fire) is 4.6 MMT of carbon. This carbon quantity represents the amount of CO₂ that was previously sequestered as biomass carbon.”
- **Proscribed Fire Outflows:** “Prescribed fire emissions in the 2000–2019 period range from 0.16 MMT CO₂ in 2016 to 1.9 MMT CO₂ in 2006, with a statewide annual average of 0.68 MMT CO₂.”
- 50 • **Wildfire Outflows:** “Annual emissions range from 1 MMT of CO₂ in 2010 to 39 MMT of CO₂ in 2018....averaging approximately 14 MMT/year. For almost all years, forests and woodlands represent the largest contributors to annual wildfire CO₂ emissions.”
- 55 • **Natural Process Gross Inflows:** “Estimation of carbon flows resulting from photosynthesis and other life cycle of plants has high uncertainty and is expected to vary from year to year depending on temperature, precipitation, and sunlight availability of the year. CARB estimated an annual average of 9.9 MMT C / year of gross stock change (excluding impacts from disturbance). CAL FIRE’s Forestry Carbon Inventory estimates an annual average of 7.1 MMT C / year.”

(9) **WHEREAS**, according to “Wildfire, Prescribed Fire, and Forest Management Activities” the current Bank of Carbon in California’s forests is 5,340 MMT, and over the past 20 years that bank of carbon was reduced by a net 218 MMT or 4%, (based on an average net-10.9 MMT of Carbon per year).

(5) **WHEREAS**, Jackson Demonstration State Forest’s Management Plan specifically states that:

“efforts will be made to limit the extent of harvest... in areas that currently have at least 10 trees/acre greater than 30” in diameter,” However, almost every acre of the proposed Timber Harvest Plans have at least 10 trees/acre with greater than 30” in diameter, illustrating that Calfire is not following its own Forest Management Plan.

(14) **WHEREAS**, CALFIRE denied climate change in cumulative effects section of the proposed THP. The THP states “exactly how and to what extent human activity plays a role in global climate change appears to be unknown” (p. 150). This statement contradicts overwhelming scientific evidence and a worldwide consensus among climate scientists that climate change is the direct result of excess carbon emission due to human activities.

(2) **WHEREAS**, the forested areas that are proposed for logging currently offer miles of beautiful hiking and biking trails in Mendocino, Caspar, and Fort Bragg’s back yards.

(3) **WHEREAS**, the areas proposed for logging are close to hundreds of residences, border three State Parks, and are visited by tens of thousands of people annually.

75 (6) **WHEREAS**, the implementation of the proposed timber harvest plans have the potential to increase fire risk adjacent to populated areas on the Coast such as East Caspar, Little Lake Road and Simpson

Lane. Timber Harvests compact soils, result in significant slash which become highly flammable as it dries out, spread highly flammable invasive plants and diseases such as sudden oak death, and create more open space for the winds which whip fires into coastal homes and towns.

80 **NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Mendocino County Climate Action Advisory Committee does hereby recommend that Jackson Demonstration Forest should:

- 1 Examine the cumulative and individual impacts of all proposed Timber Harvest Plans on achieving the State’s Goals for carbon emission reductions; and
- 85 2 Market one or both of the proposed Timber Harvest Plans on the carbon market to demonstrate the viability of, and market for, carbon sequestration in Northern California for late stage second growth redwood forest; and
- 3 Cancel one or both of the proposed Timber Harvest Plans to meet the requirements of Governor Newsom’s Executive Order.

90 This foregoing Resolution introduced by Committee Member _____, seconded by Committee Member _____, and carried this ____ day of _____, 2021 by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

95