IGNACIO GONZALEZ, INTERIM DIRECTOR JULIA KROG, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

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August 11, 2021

#### PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE OF PENDING ACTION STANDARD COASTAL DEVELOPMENT PERMIT

The Mendocino County Coastal Permit Administrator, at a regular meeting to be held on Thursday, August 26, 2021, at 10:00 a.m. or as soon thereafter as the item may be heard, will conduct a public hearing on the below described project that is located in the Coastal Zone. This meeting will be conducted virtually and not available for in person public participation (pursuant to State Executive Order N-29-20). In order to minimize the risk of exposure during this time of emergency, the public may participate digitally in meetings by sending comments to pbscommissions@mendocinocounty.org and is Mendocino available for viewing on the County YouTube page, https://www.youtube.com/MendocinoCountyVideo

**CASE#:** CDP\_2020-0002 **DATE FILED:** 1/16/2020

**OWNER: LYME REDWOOD TIMBERLANDS LLC APPLICANT: PACIFIC GAS AND ELECTRIC** 

**AGENT:** PACIFIC GAS AND ELECTRIC (NICOLE REESE)

120 WEST FIR STREET · FORT BRAGG · CALIFORNIA · 95437

REQUEST: Standard Coastal Development Permit to remove (nineteen) 19 trees along an

existing PG&E distribution line.

**ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION:** Statutory Exemption

LOCATION: In the Coastal Zone and near Little Valley, on the north side of Camp 2 Ten Mile Road and 1.8 miles east of its intersection with Highway 1, located north of South Fork Ten Mile River and within the PG&E easement; located at 31000 Camp 1 Ten Mile Road, Fort Bragg; APN:

069-080-03.

SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICT: 4 **STAFF PLANNER:** JULIANA CHERRY

The staff report, and notice, will be available 10 days before the hearing on the Department of Planning and Building Services website at: https://www.mendocinocounty.org/government/planning-buildingservices/meeting-agendas/coastal-permit-administrator

As you are an adjacent property owner and/or interested party, you are invited to submit comments, at or prior to the hearing; all correspondence should contain reference to the above noted case number. Written comments should be submitted by mail to the Department of Planning and Building Services Commission Staff, at 860 North Bush Street, Ukiah or 120 W Fir Street, Fort Bragg, California, or by email to pbscommissions@mendocinocounty.org no later than August 25, 2021. Individuals wishing to address the Coastal Permit Administrator during the public hearing under Public Expression are welcome to do so via e-mail, in lieu of personal attendance, at pbscommissions@mendocinocounty.org.

All public comment will be made available to the Coastal Permit Administrator, staff, and the general public as they are received and processed by the Clerk, and can be viewed as attachments under its respective case number listed at: https://www.mendocinocounty.org/government/planning-buildingservices/meeting-agendas/coastal-permit-administrator

To submit public comments via telecomment, a request form must be received by 7:00 a.m. the morning meetina. The telecomment form found https://www.mendocinocounty.org/government/planning-building-services/meeting-agendas.

The decision of the Coastal Permit Administrator shall be final unless a written appeal is submitted to the Board of Supervisors with a filing fee within 10 calendar days thereafter. If appealed, the decision of the Board of Supervisors to approve the project shall be final unless appealed to the Coastal Commission in writing within 10 working days following Coastal Commission receipt of a Notice of Final Action on this project. If you challenge the above case in court, you may be limited to raising only those issues described in this notice or that you or someone else raised at the public hearing, or in written correspondence delivered to the Coastal Permit Administrator at or prior to, the public hearing.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA) COMPLIANCE. Mendocino County complies with ADA requirements and upon request, will attempt to reasonably accommodate individuals with disabilities by making meeting material available in appropriate alternate formats (pursuant to Government Code Section 54953.2). Anyone requiring reasonable accommodation to participate in the meeting should contact the Department of Planning and Building Services by calling (707) 234-6650 at least five days prior to the meeting.

IGNACIO GONZALEZ, Interim Director of Planning and Building Services

# AUGUST 26, 2021 CDP 2020-0002

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WNER:	LYME REDWOOD TIMBERLANDS LLC

90 REDWOOD AVE FORT BRAGG, CA 95437

**APPLICANT:** PACIFIC GAS AND ELECTRIC

77 BEALE ST, DESK 2825E SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94105

**AGENT:** PACIFIC GAS AND ELECTRIC (NICOLE REESE)

77 BEALE ST, DESK 2825E SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94105

**REQUEST:** Standard Coastal Development Permit request to remove

nineteen (19) trees along an existing PG&E distribution

line.

**LOCATION:** In the Coastal Zone, 7± miles north of the City of Fort

Bragg, on the north side of Camp 2 Ten Mile Road, 1.8± miles east of its intersection with State Route 1 (SR 1), north of South Fork Ten Mile River and within the PG&E easement, located at 31000 Camp 1 Ten Mile Road, Fort

Bragg; APN: 069-080-03.

**TOTAL ACREAGE:** 275± Acres

**GENERAL PLAN:** Forest Lands (FL:160\*)

Coastal Element, Mendocino County General Plan

**ZONING:** Timber Production (TP:160)

Mendocino County Coastal Zoning Code

**SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICT:** 4 (Gjerde)

APPEAL JURISDICTION: No.

**ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION:** Statutory Exemption

**RECOMMENDATION:** APPROVE WITH CONDITIONS

**STAFF PLANNER:** JULIANA CHERRY

## **BACKGROUND**

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**: A Standard Coastal Development Permit request to remove nineteen (19) trees along an existing PG&E distribution line. The applicant requests that the Coastal Permit Administrator review and approve a coastal development permit to remove trees. The activity is defined by MCC Sec. 20.308.080(C), as follows:

"Major Vegetation, Removal or Harvesting" shall be defined to include one (1) or more of the following: (1) The removal of more than fifteen (15) trees or ten (10) percent of the total number of trees on the parcel, whichever is less, with a diameter of twelve (12) inches or a circumference of thirty-eight (38) inches or more measured at four and one-half (4 ½) feet vertically above the ground; or

- (2) The removal of trees within a total contiguous ground area of six thousand (6,000) square feet, or within a noncontiguous area or areas not exceeding a total of six thousand (6,000) square feet measured as the area located directly beneath the tree canopy; or
- (3) The Planning and Building Services Director may determine that a proposal to remove vegetation constitutes major vegetation removal if the Planning and Building Services Director finds that it may result in a significant impact. In making a finding that the proposed major vegetation removal may result in a significant impact, the Planning and Building Services Director shall review the proposal and determine if any of the following conditions exist or are proposed: (a) The vegetation removal involves the use of heavy equipment, or
- (b) The vegetation removal is proposed on a steep slope (fifteen percent (15%) or greater) and the removal of vegetation may result in soil erosion or landslide, or (c) The vegetation removal is located within or adjacent to an environmentally sensitive habitat, or (d) The vegetation removal may result in significant exposure of adjacent trees to wind damage, or (e) The vegetation removal may result in significant degradation of the view shed, or (f) The removal of one (1) or more trees which measure twenty-four (24) inches or more in diameter at breast height and which are visually or historically significant, exemplary of their species, or ecologically significant.
- (4) Exempt from this definition would be one (1) or more of the following: (a) Removal of trees and other vegetation that have been reviewed and approved in conjunction with an associated development permit, or (b) Removal or harvesting of vegetation for agricultural purposes in areas presently used for agriculture, or (c) Kelp harvesting, or (d) Timber operations which are in accordance with a timber harvesting plan submitted pursuant to the provisions of the Z'berg-Nejedly Forest Practice Act of 1973 (commencing with Section 4511).

A total of nineteen (19) trees, and their stumps, will be removed. Approximately 0.65 acres of non-contiguous tree canopy will be removed. The method of vegetation removal includes limited use of heavy equipment. The work will be completed within an environmentally sensitive habitat area, or ESHA, or an ESHA buffer. The average diameter at breast height is less than 24 inches. *Major Vegetation Removal* is a defined type of development within Mendocino County's Local Coastal Program boundaries.

APPLICANT'S STATEMENT: In March 20, 2020, the applicant revised the project description to read: "Pacific Gas and Electric proposes approximately nineteen (19) hazard tree removals as part of PG&E's Community Wildfire Safety Program. This work is along an existing PG&E distribution line and would not introduce new infrastructure. Therefore, it is considered maintenance work and should not be classified as a 'project' in the eyes of the State of California. These trees include three (3) bay trees, five (5) Douglas Fir, nine (9) Grand Fir, one (1) spruce, one (1) redwood are planned to be removed. All trees are class R2 (12.1-23.9 DBH). No brush removal or grading will occur as part of the vegetation management. Hand tools, a chipper, and a bucket truck will be used in the removal of this vegetation. PG&E facilities on this property and maintenance thereof is pursuant to a perpetual easement on the subject parcel. See attachment for a review of sensitive plant or animal species present in or adjacent to areas where tree removal is proposed by a qualified PG&E biologist."

**RELATED APPLICATIONS**: None (Noting: Assessor Parcel Map 069-080 identify the subject lot and surrounding lots as Timber Production Zones).

SITE CHARACTERISTICS: The project site is located north of Cleone and near the South Fork Ten Mile River (See attachment Location Map). The project site is located in the northwest corner of APN: 069-080-03 (See attachment Aerial Imagery and Topographic Map). The zoning district is Timber Production and the general plan classification is Forest Lands (See attachment). The project site is within the Coastal Zone, even though easterly portions of APN: 069-080-03 are east of the coastal zone boundary (See attachment LCP Land Use Map 11: Little Valley). The project site is adjacent to lands mapped as either prime or nonprime agricultural areas (See attachment). The LCP Habitats & Resources map depicts the project area as woodland habitats (See attachment). The Biological Resources exhibit (attachment) indicates key wildlife areas are adjacent to the northwest area of the parcel. Post LCP Certification Permit and Appeal Jurisdiction map depicts the northwest area of APN: 069-080-03 as adjoining the mapped appeal jurisdiction; based on the scale of mapping, it is not possible to determine whether some of the project area is within the Commission's appeal jurisdiction (See attachment). The adjoining lots share similar ownership, i.e. Redwood Lyme (See attachment). The surrounding properties are within the Fort Bragg Rural Fire Protection District (See attachment). The Special Flood Hazard Areas and Wetlands exhibit, similar to the Appeal Jurisdiction exhibit, map Ten Mile River just west of the northwest area of the parcel. Water resources are rated "Critical Water Resources Bedrock" (See attachment). The project area includes slopes and land elevations that rise to approximately 240 feet. The soil type is Western Classification 113. The parcel adjoins lands in Williamson Act contracts (See attachment). If otherwise not associated with Williamson Act contracts, the surrounding parcels are mapped TPZ2018, i.e. Timber Production (See attachment). The area proposed for work is TPZ2018. The farmland classification is "Grazing Land."

**SURROUNDING LAND USE AND ZONING:** As listed on Table 1 below, the surrounding lands are similarly classified as Forrest Lands, excepting lands to the west that are classified as Range Lands.

Table 1. Surrounding lands, lot sizes, and land uses							
	GENERAL PLAN	ZONING	LOT SIZES	USES			
NORTH	Forest Lands (FL)	Timber Production (TP)	123 Acres	Tree Crops			
EAST	Forest Lands (FL)	Timber Production (TP)	180 Acres	Tree Crops			
SOUTH	Forest Lands (FL)	Timber Production (TP)	64 Acres	Tree Crops			
WEST	Range Lands (RL)	Range Lands (RL-160)	58 Acres	Tree Crops			

#### **PUBLIC SERVICES:**

ACCESS: CAMP 1 TEN MILE ROAD

FIRE DISTRICT: FORT BRAGG RURAL FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

WATER DISTRICT: NONE SEWER DISTRICT: NONE

#### LOCAL COASTAL PROGRAM CONSISTENCY

MCC Sec. 20.308.080(C) *Major Vegetation Removal* is consistent with the goals and policies of Mendocino County Local Coastal Program, as detailed below. The proposed location for development is less than 100 feet from environmentally sensitive habitat areas, as nineteen (19) trees would be removed within the ESHA or ESHA buffers.

**1. General Plan and Zoning Consistency:** The project site is classified as Forest Lands and is located within the Timber Production (TP) Zoning District.

Coastal Element Sec. 2.2 Intent.

The Forest Lands classification is intended to be applied to lands which are suited for and are appropriately retained for the growing, harvesting and production of timber and timber-related products. The classification includes lands eligible to be zoned Timberland Production (TPZ); intermixed smaller parcels and other contiguous lands, the inclusion of which is necessary for the protection and efficient management of timber resource lands.

MCC Sec. 20.364.005 Intent.

[The Timber Production District] is intended to encompass lands within the Coastal Zone which because of their soil types and timber growing capabilities are suited for and should be devoted to the growing, harvesting, and production of timber and timber related products and are taxed as such.

The proposed *Major Vegetation Removal* would not conflict with the goals, policies, or intent of the Forest Lands classification, Coastal Element Chapter 4.2 *Rockport to Little Valley Road Planning Area,* or MCC Chapter 20.364 *Timberland Production District.* 

2. Habitats and Natural Resources: LCP Habitats & Resources map depicts woodland and riparian areas adjacent to the areas where removing nineteen (19) trees is proposed, as Major Vegetation Removal. Coastal Element Chapter 3.1 and MCC Chapter 20.496 Environmentally Sensitive Habitat and Other Resource Areas applies to all development proposed in the Coastal Zone, unless and until it can be demonstrated to the approving authority that the project will not degrade an environmentally sensitive habitat or resource area and shall be compatible with the continuance of such areas.

The applicant provided the following technical reports and responses to comments received:

- Plant Survey Fort Bragg 1101 Vegetation Removal. ERM. June 10, 2020.
- Biological Constraints Report for Gas & Electric Distribution Projects. PG&E. October 25, 2019.
- Fort Bragg 1101 Mitigation Proposal in partnership with Save the Redwoods League "Cape Vizcaino Forest Restoration Project". No date.
- Best Management Practices. PG&E. March 14, 2019.
- Vegetation Management-Fuel Reduction Activity Specific Erosion and Sediment Control Plan. PG&E Construction Stormwater Group. October 30, 2018.

On August 25, 2020 and April 22, 2021, PBS requested comments from California Coastal Commission (Commission) and California Department of Fish & Wildlife (CDFW). Staff requested a joint agency site view, concurrence regarding the extent of ESHA, and comments on development within the ESHA buffer or ESHA. On October 16, 2020, the following comments (and nine recommendations) were received from staff at CDFW:

"Thank you for the opportunity for CDFW to comment on CDP 2020-002. We offer the following informal comments and recommendations on this Project in our role as a Trustee and Responsible Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA; California Public Resource Code section 21000 et seq.). These comments are intended to help the Lead Agency in making informed decisions early in the review process.

Upon review of the provided documents, CDFW determines that not enough information has been provided to assess the Project's potential environmental impacts or the proposed mitigation measures to offset identified impacts.

**CEQA Documentation.** The provided documents state a Negative Declaration is proposed for the project. A Negative Declaration means "the proposed project will not have a significant effect on the environment and does not require the preparation of an environmental document" (CEQA Section 21064). A Negative Declaration is appropriate for projects that will not have a significant effect on the environment. The documents provided state there is potential for sensitive biological resources (rare plants, species of special concern) to occur in the Project site and provides mitigation measures and Best Management Practices (BMP's) to reduce impacts to those sensitive resources. A Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) means "the initial study has identified potentially significant effects on the environment...but would avoid the effects or

# COASTAL PERMIT ADMINISTRATOR STAFF REPORT FOR STANDARD CDP

mitigate the effects to a point where clearly no significant effect on the environment would occur, and there is no substantial evidence that the project may have a significant effect on the environment" (CEQA Section 21064.3). An MND is appropriate for projects that may have significant effects without mitigation measures, but with mitigation measures the impacts are reduced to less than significant.

<u>CDFW recommendation 1</u>: Due to potential of the proposed Project to have significant impacts to sensitive biological resources without mitigation measures, and the inclusion of mitigation measures in the provided document, an MND is the most appropriate environmental document to assess the Project's impacts and mitigate them to less than significant.

Rare Plants, Natural Communities, and Riparian Vegetation. Surveys for rare plants and sensitive natural communities were not conducted adequately and determination of presence or absence was not adequate. Site visits were conducted on 4/13/2019 and 5/12/20 by PG&E biologist and on 4/22/2020 by contracted biologist to conduct the floristic and rare plant survey; it is unclear what surveys were conducted on 4/13/2019 and 5/12/2020.

These surveys were not conducted at the time of year when potential rare plants are evident and identifiable. The provided documents state **swamp harebell** (Campanula californica) with the potential to occur due to presence of suitable habitat. A search of the California Natural Diversity Database (CNNDB) indicates four documented occurrences of swamp harebell within a 1.5-mile radius of the Project site (CNDDB 2020). A site visit was not conducted when the plant is evident and identifiable, which is June through August (CNPS 2020a), the peak blooming period of the species. Botanical field survey visits should be conducted throughout the growing season to accurately determine what plants exist in the Project site (CDFW 2018). The absence of CNNDB occurrences of swamp harebell is used to determine absence of the species. Absence cannot be presumed due to do absence of documented records. The provided documents identify suitable habitat is present and surveys need to be conducted to determine presence or absence.

The provided documents state four habitat types: conifer forest, forested riparian, mowed, and shrub, with no descriptions of dominant plant species and associated species. The provided documents identify **Coast Grand Fir** (Abies grandis) **Forest**, a Sensitive Natural Community, within 1.5-mile of the Project Site. Nine coast grand fir trees are identified for removal. The habitat types identified are not vegetation communities defined by the Manual of California Online (CNPS 2020b). The provided documents do not include sufficient information to determine if Sensitive Natural Communities are present.

The provided documents identify **forested riparian habitat** is present in the Project site, with four trees proposed for removal within or very near forested riparian habitat. The provided documents do not describe the Project's potential impacts to riparian habitat and vegetation.

In summary, the provided documents do not include sufficient information to determine potential impacts and their significance to rare plants, Sensitive Natural Communities, and riparian habitat or vegetation.

<u>CDFW recommendation 2:</u> To determine if rare plants and/or Sensitive Natural Communities are present within the Project site and surrounding 100 foot area, additional biological assessments should be conducted which adhere to CDFW's Protocols for Surveying and Evaluating Impacts to Special Status Native Plant Populations and Sensitive Natural Communities (CDFW 2018). Locations and extent of rare plant populations and Sensitive Natural Communities should be identified and reported in a biological assessment report. The biological assessment report should also indicate potential impacts and avoidance or minimization measures to rare plants, Sensitive Natural Communities, and riparian vegetation to determine their significance.

**Bats.** The provided documents states none of the trees proposed for removal exhibit basal hollows that would provide tree roosting habitat for bats. However, the documents did not provide the methodology used to determine the absence of bat species. The absence of documented

# COASTAL PERMIT ADMINISTRATOR STAFF REPORT FOR STANDARD CDP

occurrences within the vicinity of the Project site is also used to evaluate the absence of bat presence. Absence of documented occurrences does not indicate absence of species.

The provided documents do not indicate if trees which are to remain and within the vicinity of the Project site contain potential roosting habitat. Extra noise, vibration, increased lights can lead to the disturbance of roosting bats (H.T. Harvey & Associates 2019). The presence of riparian habitat within and near the Project site increases the likelihood of bat presence (H.T. Harvey & Associates 2019). The provided documents do not include sufficient information to adequately determine the potential impacts bat species.

<u>CDFW Recommendation 3</u>: A bat habitat survey should be conducted by a qualified biologist familiar with bat species in coastal Mendocino County for the Project to determine the presence and extent of bat habitat within the Project area. The survey should include the Project site and surrounding 100-foot buffer. A survey report should include both the survey methodology and results. If potential roosting habitat is identified, the report should include measures to avoid, minimize or mitigate impacts to bat habitat and roosting bats. (See recommended Condition 9c)

<u>CDFW Recommendation 4</u>: After tree felling, trees should be retained in place overnight, allowing any bats present to disperse. (See recommended Condition 9c)

**Sonoma Tree Vole.** The provided documents do not include an assessment of presence of Sonoma tree vole (STV) (Arborimus pomo), a species of special concern (SSC). Five documented occurrences of STV are within three miles of the Project site, with the closest being approximately 1.9 miles to the north (CNDDB 2020). The Project site contains potential STV habitat, including Douglas fir (Pseudotsuga menzeisii) and grand fir (Abies grandis) (Forsman et. Al., 2016), and has connectivity to surrounding conifer forest with suitable habitat. The lack of CNDDB record occurrences on the project site should not be interpreted as absence.

<u>CDFW recommendation 5</u>: A survey for the presence of STV within the Project site and habitat trees within 100-feet of those trees should occur due to the presence of suitable habitat and documented occurrences nearby. The survey should include visual assessment on the ground for evidence of nesting material and visual survey of tree canopy for potential nests following the Individual Tree Examination Survey Method outlined in Survey Protocol for the Red Tree Vole (Huff, R. et al 2012). Locations of STV nesting material or nests should be identified and reported in a biological assessment report. The report should also indicate potential impacts and avoidance or minimization measures to STV to determine their significance.

**Amphibians.** The provided documents states potential for three SSC amphibians to be within Project site, due to presence of suitable habitat. These species include foothill yellow-legged frog (Rana boylii), northern red-legged frog (Rana aurora), and red-bellied newt (Taricha rivularis). However, mitigation measures identified in the provided documents is for only foothill yellow-legged frog. The provided documents do not include sufficient information to determine potential impacts or their significance to SSC amphibians.

<u>CDFW Recommendation 6:</u> A pre-construction survey for the three SSC amphibian species should be conducted within the Project site 14 days prior to the start of construction. Surveys are to be conducted by a qualified biologist familiar with these species. If species are observed, the Project biologist shall contact CDFW. Biologists at CDFW will work with the Project biologist to formulate appropriate mitigation measures to avoid potential impacts. (See recommended Condition 9d).

<u>CDFW Recommendation 7</u>: Each of the three amphibian SSC should be included in BMP FP-16; specifically: Daily visual surveys under vehicles prior to moving; Visual surveys around downed material prior to moving; and Visual inspections in the area which tree material will be felled. Surveys are to be conducted by a qualified biologist familiar with these species. If an SSC amphibian is observed, they are to leave the area on their own accord or Project biologist should be contacted for additional assistance. (See recommended Condition 9d)

<u>CDFW Recommendation 8</u>: A biological monitor should be present when Project activities are in and near the riparian area. (See recommended Condition 9d).

**Nesting Birds.** The provided documents state the Project will incorporate PG&E BMP's for nesting birds, which require crews to stop work and contact biologist if any active nest is detected. Migratory birds are protected under California Fish and Game Code (CFGC) Section 3513 and within CDFW jurisdiction. The provided documents do not include sufficient measures to prevent potentially significant impacts to nesting birds.

<u>CDFW recommendation 9</u>: To prevent potential destruction of nests of listed, SSC, or migratory birds, a nesting bird survey should be conducted within 2 weeks prior to vegetation (shrub and tree) removal if such activities are to occur within the nesting bird season between February 15 through August 31. If nests are observed avoidance buffers should be established by a qualified biologist familiar with observed species in consultation with CDFW." (See recommended Condition 9b)

NB: "Construction," as referenced above, refers to removing nineteen (19) trees and its associated activity.

As proposed, the applicant shall partner with Save the Redwoods League and provide funding to treat five acres of the "Cape Vizcaino Forest Restoration Project." The five acres of forest land restoration would be a 5:1 replacement ratio for less than one acre of potential tree canopy reduction (See recommended Condition 10).

As recommended by CDFW staff, the applicant completed Sonoma Tree Vole survey, and additional reporting about rare plants, natural communities, and riparian vegetation (See Pacific Gas and Electric Company March 24, 2021 correspondence: "CDFW Comments on PG&E CDP Application 2020-0002 PG&E Tree Removal on Camp 2 Ten Mile Road."). The following sensitive habitat areas were identified:

- Swamp harebell habitat
- Wetlands and riparian habitat
- Douglas fir forest and woodland
- Arroyo willow thickets
- Hairy leaf woolly leaf ceanothus chaparral

The application demonstrates that removing less than 0.65 acres of tree canopy from a 275-acre parcel satisfies the adopted standards for development permitted within the buffer area (See MCC Sec. 20.496.020). On April 22, 2021, the applicant's response to CDFW comments was distributed to Commission, CDFW, and other agency staff for their review and comment. As no response has been received from Commission or CDFW staff, PBS staff (including Assistant Director Julia Krog) conferred with the applicant's agent, Nicole Reese. PBS staff gave examples of previously adopted avoidance measures relating to birds, bats, frogs, *et al* and discussed the applicability of a statutory exemption from CEQA, e.g. §21080(b)(4), or an exemption for certified State regulatory programs, e.g. §15282(m), §15269(b) or §15269(c). The recommended avoidance measures are consistent with MCC Chapter 20.496 and would satisfy Coastal Element Chapter 3.1 goals and policies for the protection of habitats and natural resources (See recommended Conditions 9).

3. Hazards Management: Coastal Element Chapter 3.4 and MCC Chapter 20.500 Hazard Areas applies to all development proposed in the Coastal Zone unless and until it is determined by the Coastal Permit Administrator that the project is not subject to threat from geologic, fire, flood, or other hazards. Mapping does not associate geologic hazards with the site.

MCC Sec. 20.500.025 Fire Hazards. The site is rated a High Fire Hazard and is located within the Fort Bragg Fire Protection District (See *Fire Hazard Zones & Responsibility Areas*). On April 22, 2021 and August 25, 2020, comments were requested from California Department of Forestry and Fire Prevention (CalFire) and the Fort Bragg Fire Protection District (FBFD). On April 28, 2021, FBFD responded that they had no comment. On May 6, 2021, Mendocino County Air Quality Management District responded with a request to consider alternative disposal methods, other than burning. The application submittal includes a Public Agency, Public and Private Utility Right of Way Exemption PG&E Fort Bragg A 1101; and on June 25, 2020, CalFire accepted the Notice of Exemption.

MCC Sec. 20.500.030 Flood Hazard. The project site is approximate to a Special Flood Hazard area. Sec. 20.500.030(B)(1) states, in part, that non-structural agricultural uses shall be permitted in the one-hundred year floodway. As proposed, the project is consistent with development standards in flood hazard areas.

While the project location is proximate to hazards, no structures are proposed. The removal of trees should not change the risk to life and property in areas of flood and fire hazards. The project would not create, nor contribute significantly to erosion, geologic instability or destruction of the site or surroundings areas, nor in any way require protective devices that could substantially alter natural landforms along bluffs and cliffs. Staff recommends the proposed would be consistent with Coastal Element Chapter 3.4 policies and satisfy MCC Chapter 20.500 regulations.

- **4. Visual Resource and Special Treatment Areas:** The project site is not mapped as a Highly Scenic Area; therefore, Coastal Element Chapter 3.5 visual resource and special treatment area policies and MCC Chapter 20.504 *Visual Resources and Special Treatment Areas* are not applicable.
- **5. Archaeological/Cultural Resources:** On October 14, 2020, Mendocino County Archaeological Commission considered and accepted the cultural survey report findings that no cultural, historical, or archaeological sites were observed. Staff recommends inclusion of Condition 8, which is a "Discovery Clause."

On August 25, 2020 and April 22, 2021, the proposed was referred to three local tribes for review and comment, including the Cloverdale Rancheria, Sherwood Valley Band of Pomo Indians, and the Redwood Valley Rancheria. Redwood Valley Rancheria responded that they have no comment at this time. As conditioned, staff recommends the project would be consistent with Coastal Element Chapter 3.5 archaeological resource policies and MCC Chapter 22.12.

- 6. Timber Resources: MCC Chapter 20.510 Timber Resources applies to all lands designated FL and TP, within the County of Mendocino's Coastal Zone. The purpose of Chapter 20.510 is to ensure that the long-term productivity of timber soils and timberlands shall be protected and maintained in timber production to ensure the protection of the area's principal economic base. MCC Sec. 20.510.020 establishes buffer area criteria for development adjacent to lands designated as FL or TP. The application proposes to remove nineteen (19) trees on lands within the FL District; the application does not propose residential development nor creating new parcels. On April 22, 2021 and August 25, 2020, the proposed tree removal was referred to the Farm Advisor, Agriculture Commission, and Forestry Advisor; they responded that they do not have comments at this time. Therefore, as proposed the project complies with the requirements of MCC Chapter 20.510 and the goals and policies of Coastal Element Chapter 3.3 Forestry and Soils Resources.
- 7. Public Access: Coastal Element Chapter 3.6 policies and MCC Chapter 20.528 Coastal Access Regulations and Open Space Easements applies to all projects in the coastal zone which fall within the definition of development. There is no evidence of prescriptive rights or existing public easement at the project location. Staff recommends the proposed project would be consistent with Coastal Element Chapter 3.6 policies and satisfy MCC Chapter 20.528 Coastal Access Regulations and Open Space Easements.
- **8. Groundwater Resources, Transportation/Circulation, and Other Public Services:** The project location is mapped as a Critical Water Resource Bedrock Area. Coastal Element Chapter 3.8 policies

and MCC Chapter 20.516 *Transportation, Utilities and Public Services* applies to all new development and, in particular, development which requires the expansion or extension of public works or private facilities. On April 22, 2021 and August 25, 2020, comments were requested from County Department of Transportation (DOT), and on April 23, 2021 and September 4, 2020, DOT staff responded that they had no comments at that time. Similarly, on May 6, 2021 and September 14, 2020, Department of Environmental Health responded that they had no comment at that time. Removing trees and tree stumps would not demand additional transportation, utilities or public services. Staff recommends Coastal Element Chapter 3.8 policies and MCC Chapter 20.516 are not applicable.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION**

The Secretary for Resources has found that certain classes or projects have been determined not to have a significant effect on the environment and are therefore exempt from the requirement for the preparation of environmental documents, and the Project meets the criteria for a Statutory Exemption from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under Section 15269(b), which includes emergency repairs to publicly or privately owned service facilities necessary to maintain service essential to the public health, safety, or welfare. Emergency repairs include those that require a reasonable amount of planning to address an anticipated emergency.

#### RECOMMENDATION

Pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 20.532 and Chapter 20.536 of the Mendocino County Coastal Zoning Code, the Coastal Permit Administrator approves Coastal Development Permit 2020-0002 and a request to remove nineteen trees from a site located at 31000 Camp 1 Ten Mile Road, Fort Bragg (APN: 069-080-03).

#### **FINDINGS:**

- 1. Pursuant with MCC Section 20.532.095(A)(1), removing nineteen (19) trees, on lands adjacent to a PG&E easement and consisting of 275-acres classified as *Forest Lands*, is consistent with the goals and policies of Mendocino Coastal Element, including Chapters 2.2 and 3.1, as *Major Vegetation Removal*, meaning removal of trees and other vegetation, can be approved in conjunction with an associated development permit; and
- 2. Pursuant with MCC Section 20.532.095(A)(2), removing trees and tree stumps would not demand additional transportation, utilities or public services; and
- 3. Pursuant with MCC Section 20.532.095(A)(3), removing unsafe trees, from locations proximate to power distribution lines, would not conflict with the purpose and intent of the Timber Production District, as well as all other provisions of Division II of Title 20 of the Mendocino County Code, and preserves the integrity of the District by continuing an agricultural use type that is a principal permitted use in the TP District; and
- 4. Pursuant with MCC Section 20.532.095(A)(4), removing unsafe trees, if completed in compliance with the conditions of approval, would not have any significant adverse impacts on the environment within the meaning of the California Environmental Quality Act. The project is Statutory Exempt pursuant to Section 15269(b); and
- 5. Pursuant with MCC Section 20.532.095(A)(5), the proposed tree removal would not have any adverse impact on any known archaeological or paleontological resources, as there are no known resources within the vicinity of the site and Standard Condition 8 is in place when archaeological sites or artifacts are discovered; and
- 6. Pursuant with MCC Section 20.532.095(A)(6), other public services, including but not limited to, solid waste and public roadway capacity have been considered and provide adequate access to the property. The site is undeveloped, associated with *Tree crops* and *Forest Production and Processing*, and tree removal is not anticipated demand additional public services; and

- 7. Pursuant to MCC Section 20.532.095(B)(1), the proposed development conforms with public access and public recreation policies of Chapter 3 of the California Coastal Act and Coastal Element Chapter 3.6 of Mendocino County General Plan; and
- 8. Pursuant to MCC Section 20.532.100(A)(1), avoidance measures are recommended to protect the surveyed sensitive habitat areas and there is no feasible less environmentally damaging alternative than removing nineteen (19) trees from lands adjacent to power distribution lines; and
- 9. Pursuant to MCC Section 20.532.100(A)(2), the removal of nineteen (19) trees from lands adjacent to power distribution lines is anticipated to reduce fire hazard risk and is compatible with the long-term protection of *Forest Lands* and adjacent *Range Lands*; and
- 10. Pursuant to MCC Section 20.532.100(B)(3), the removal of nineteen (19) trees from lands classified as Forest Lands will not result in the conversion of agricultural lands to a non-agricultural use and Tree Crops and Forest Production and Processing land uses will continue to be compatible on this 275-acre parcel.

#### **CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL:**

NB: "Construction" refers to removing nineteen (19) trees and its associated activity.

- 1. This action shall become final on the 11<sup>th</sup> day following the decision unless an appeal is filed pursuant to Section 20.544.015 of the Mendocino County Coastal Zoning Code. The permit shall become effective after the appeal period has expired and no appeal has been filed with the Board of Supervisors. The permit shall expire and become null and void at the expiration of two years after the effective date except where construction and use of the property in reliance on such permit have been initiated prior to its expiration.
- 2. The use and occupancy of the premises shall be established and maintained in conformance with the provisions of Division II of Title 20 of the Mendocino County Code.
- 3. The application, along with supplemental exhibits and related material, shall be considered elements of this permit, and that compliance therewith is mandatory, unless an amendment has been approved by the Coastal Permit Administrator.
- 4. This permit shall be subject to the securing of all necessary permits for the proposed development from County, State and Federal agencies having jurisdiction.
- 5. The property owners shall secure all required building permits for the proposed project, as required by the Building Division of the Department of Planning and Building Services.
- 6. This permit shall be subject to revocation or modification upon a finding of any one or more of the following:
  - a. The permit was obtained or extended by fraud.
  - b. One or more of the conditions upon which the permit was granted have been violated.
  - c. The use for which the permit was granted is conducted so as to be detrimental to the public health, welfare or safety, or to be a nuisance.
  - d. A final judgment of a court of competent jurisdiction has declared one or more conditions to be void or ineffective or has enjoined or otherwise prohibited the enforcement or operation of one or more such conditions.
- 7. This permit is issued without a legal determination having been made upon the number, size or shape

- of parcels encompassed within the permit described boundaries. Should, at any time, a legal determination be made that the number, size or shape of parcels within the permit described boundaries are different than that which is legally required by this permit, this permit shall become null and void.
- 8. If any archaeological sites or artifacts are discovered during site excavation or construction activities, the property owner shall cease and desist from all further excavation and disturbances within one hundred (100) feet of the discovery, and make notification of the discovery to the Director of the Department of Planning and Building Services. The Director will coordinate further actions for the protection of the archaeological resources in accordance with Section 22.12.090 of the Mendocino County Code.
- 9. In accordance with MCC Section 20.496.020(A)(1)(b), the applicant shall protect environmentally sensitive habitat areas and other resources, including birds, bats, amphibians and fish, soil and vegetation, by the following avoidance measures:
  - a. <u>Standard Best Management Practices</u>. BMPs, such as straw bales, coir rolls, and/or silt fencing structures shall be employed to ensure minimization of erosion resulting from tree removal and to avoid runoff into sensitive habitat areas. Construction fencing shall be utilized to protect sensitive habitat areas. Ground disturbance shall be limited to the minimum necessary and disturbed soil areas shall be stabilized as soon as feasible. Any soil stockpiles shall be covered or otherwise stabilized to prevent dust impacts. Any bare soil created by the tree removal activities project shall be revegetated with native vegetation and/or native seed mixes for soil stabilization. (See also "Best Management Practices." TD-7102P-01-JA01. PG&E. March 14, 2019.)
  - b. <u>Birds</u>. The bird breeding season typically extends from February to August. (1) Seasonal Avoidance: No surveys are required if activity occurs in the non-breeding season (September to January). If development is to occur during the breeding season (February to August), a preconstruction survey is required within 14 days of the onset of construction to ensure that no nesting birds will be disturbed during development. (2) Nest Avoidance: If active special status bird nests are observed, no ground disturbance activities shall occur within a minimum 100 foot exclusion zone. These exclusion zones may vary depending on species, habitat and level of disturbance. The exclusion zone shall remain in place around the active nest until all young are no longer dependent upon the nest. A biologist shall monitor the nest site weekly during the breeding season to ensure the buffer is sufficient to protect the nest site from potential disturbance. (3) Construction shall only occur during daylight hours to limit disturbing construction noise and minimize artificial lights.
  - c. Bats. Bat roost sites can change from year to year, so pre-construction surveys are usually necessary to determine the presence or absence of bat roost sites in a given area. (1) Preconstruction surveys for bats: Construction will ideally occur between September 1st and October 31 after the young have matured and prior to the bat hibernation period. If it is necessary to disturb potential bat roost sites between February 11 and August 31, pre-construction surveys shall be performed by a qualified biologist 14 days prior to the onset of development activities. If active bat roosts are observed, no ground disturbance activities shall occur within a minimum 100 foot exclusion zone. These exclusion zones may vary depending on species, habitat and level of disturbance. The exclusion zone shall remain in place around the active roost until all young are no longer dependent upon the roost. Pre-construction bat surveys involve surveying trees, rock outcrops, and buildings subject to construction for evidence of bat use (guano accumulation, or acoustic or visual detections). If evidence of bat use is found, then biologists shall conduct acoustic surveys under appropriate conditions using an acoustic detector, to determine whether a site is occupied. If bats are found, a minimum 50 foot buffer shall be implemented around the roost tree. (2) Construction shall only occur during daylight hours to limit disturbing construction noise and minimize artificial lights. (3) After tree felling, trees should be retained in place overnight, allowing any bats present to disperse.
  - d. Amphibians and fish. (1) Erosion control: Straw wattles shall be placed between the areas of construction and adjacent ESHAs where there is a slope greater than 5% to prevent erosion of

sediments into the riparian and streams. (2) Reduce footprint of impact: Protective fencing shall be placed around all construction sites and around the staging area to reduce the impact site to within the fenced area and to prevent debris from moving towards the riparian and stream ESHAs. (3) Construction shall only occur during daylight hours to limit disturbing construction noise and minimize artificial lights. (4) Limit ground disturbing construction to dry season: Ground disturbing construction within 100 feet of the stream shall only occur during the dry season, which is generally April 1 to October 31 of any year. (5) A biological monitor should be present when Project activities are in and near the riparian area.

- e. <u>Soil and vegetation</u>. Clearly mark the staging area site with cones and surround with temporary fencing.
- f. Special status amphibians. (1) Contractor Education: Within two weeks prior to construction activities, project contractors shall be trained by a qualified biologist in the identification of the California red-legged frog, foothill yellow-legged frog, Tailed frog, and the southern torrent salamander. (2) Pre-construction search: During ground disturbing activities, construction crews shall begin each day with a visual search around the staging and impact area to detect the presence of amphibians. (3) Careful debris removal: During construction and debris removal, any wood stockpiles shall be moved carefully by hand in order to avoid accidental crushing or other damage to amphibians. (4) No construction during rain event: If a rain event occurs during the construction period, all ground disturbing activities shall cease for a period of 48 hours, starting after the rain stops. Prior to resuming construction activities, trained construction crew member(s) shall examine the site for the presence of special status amphibians. (4.a) If no special status amphibians are found during inspections, ground-disturbing activities may resume. (4.b) If a special status amphibian is detected, construction crews shall stop all ground disturbing work and shall contact the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) or a qualified biologist. Clearance from the CDFW will be required prior to reinitiating work. The CDFW will need to be consulted and will need to be in agreement with protective measures needed for any potential special status amphibians.
- 10. The applicant shall partner with Save the Redwoods League by providing funding to treat five acres of forest land restoration, as part of the "Cape Vizcaino Forest Restoration Project."
- 11. The applicant is authorized to fell and remove nineteen (19) trees and remove associated tree stumps. The applicant may chip the vegetation, and distribute the chip onsite or distribute it the coastal Mendocino County community.
- 12. Any Building Permit request shall include this coastal development permit (printed on the plans submitted).

August 10, 2021

DATE

JULIANA CHERRY PLANNER III

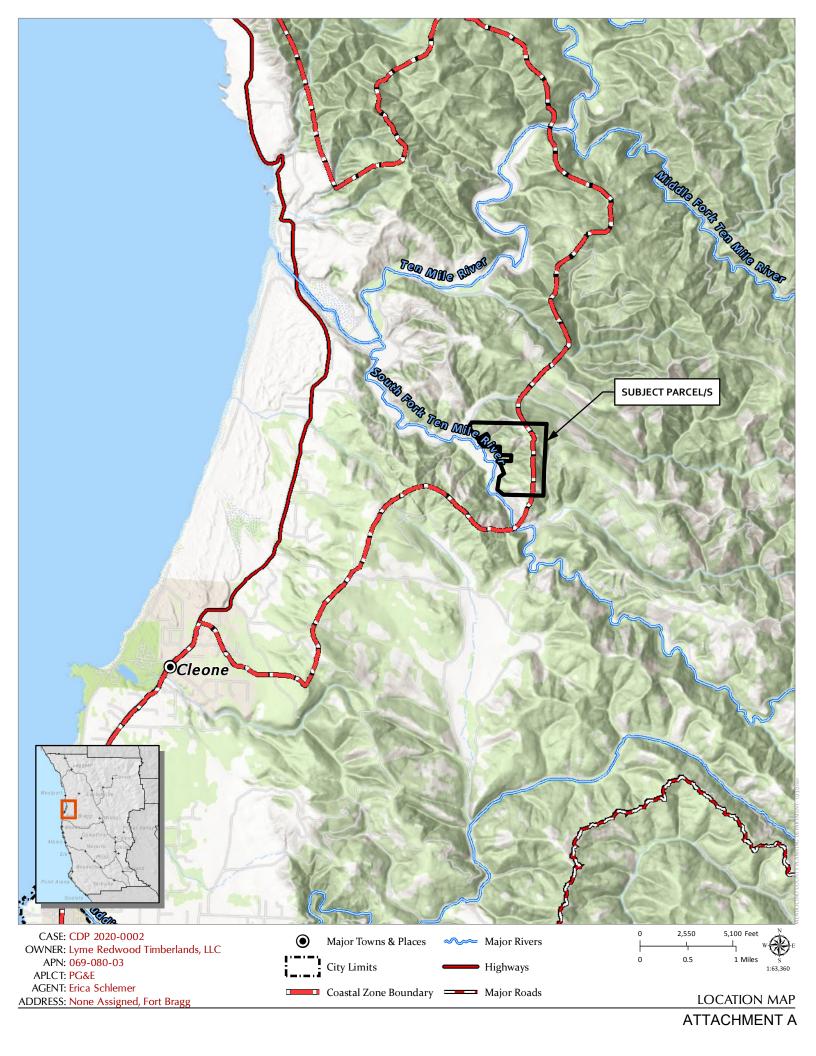
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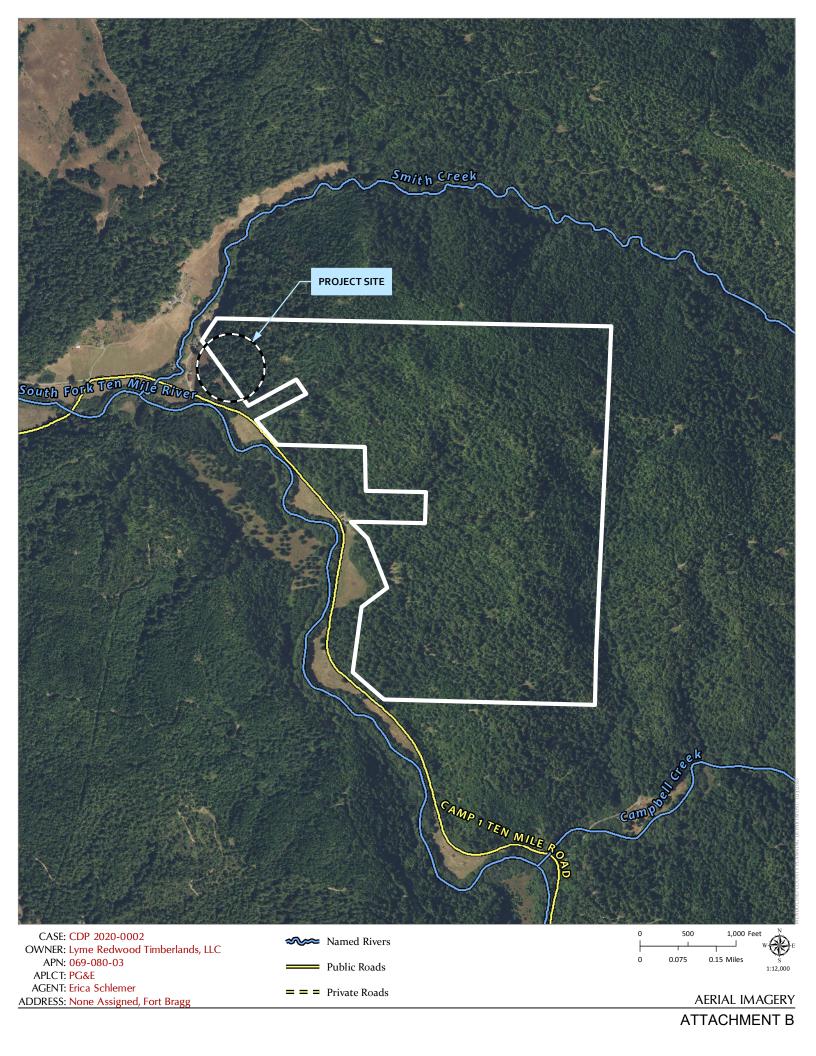
### COASTAL PERMIT ADMINISTRATOR STAFF REPORT FOR STANDARD CDP

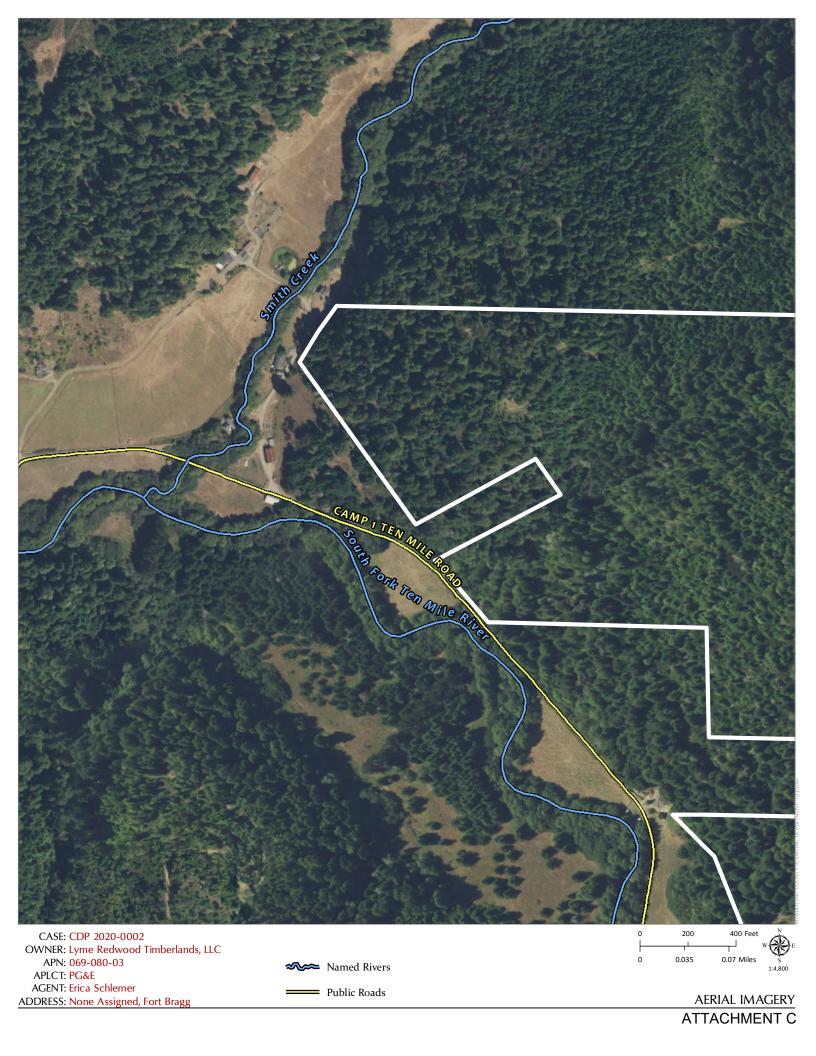
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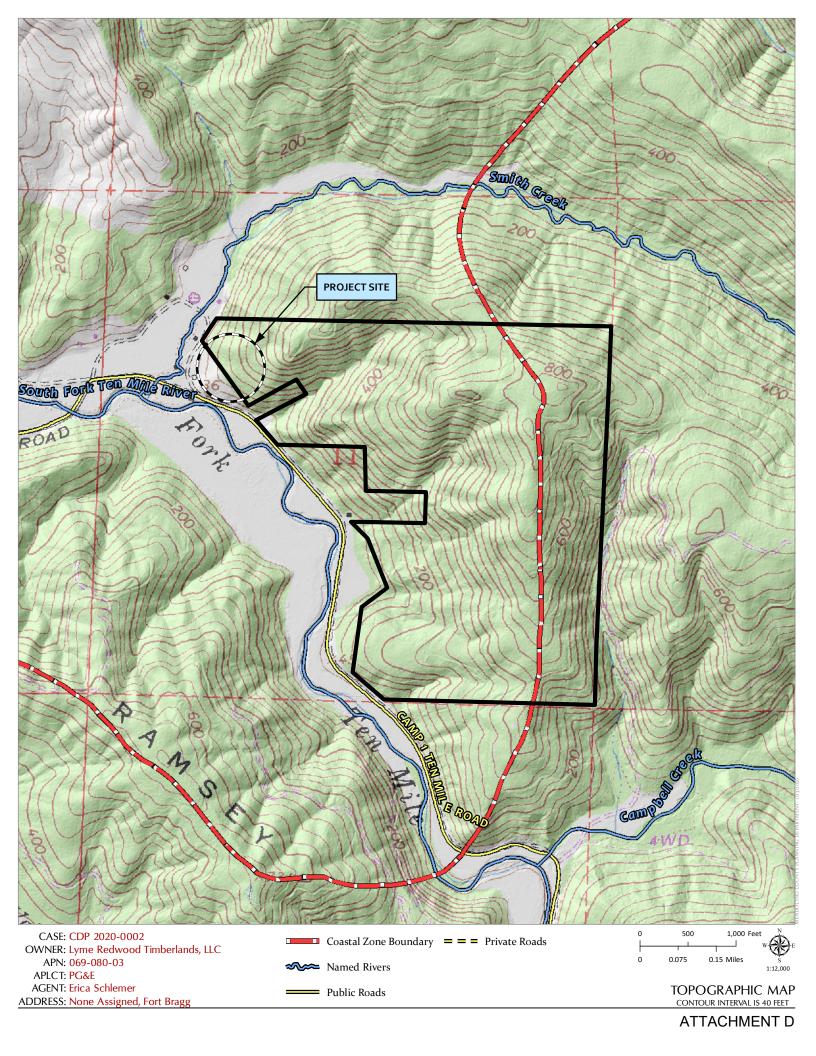
### **ATTACHMENTS:**

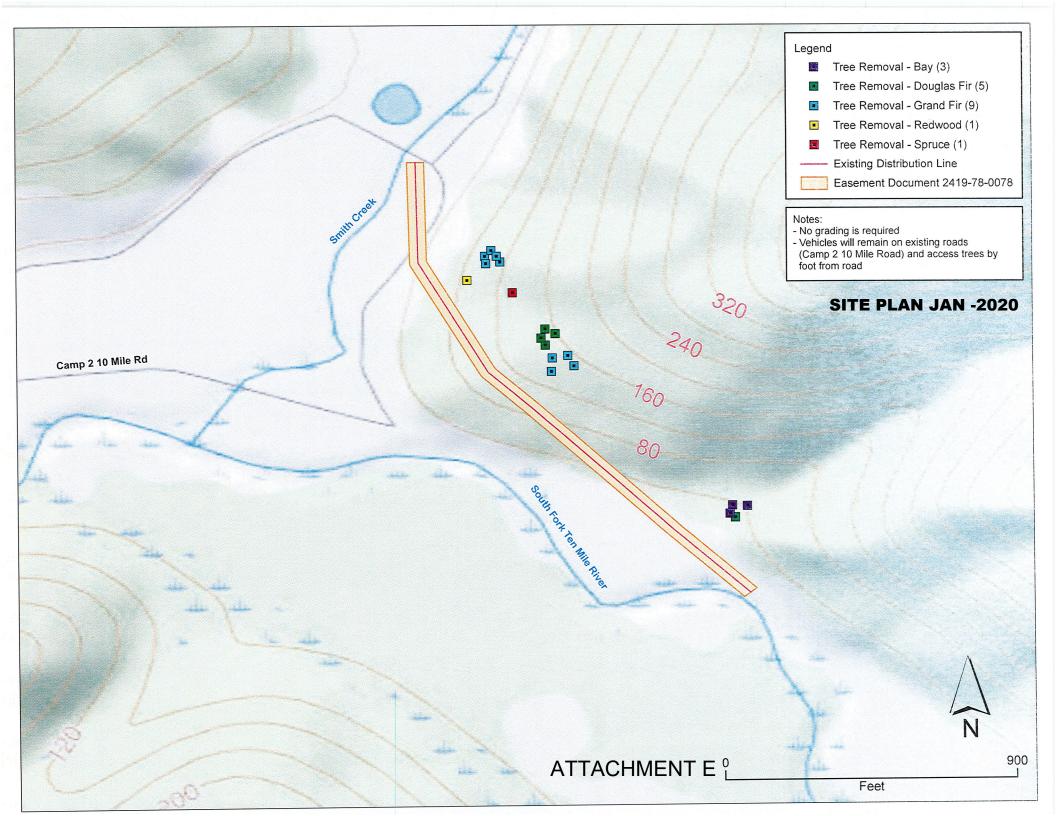
- A. Location Map
- B. Aerial Imagery
- C. Aerial Imagery
- D. Topographical Map
- E. Site Plan January 2020
- F. Site Plan July 2020
- G. Zoning Display Map
- H. General Plan Classifications
- I. LCP Land Use Map 11: Little Valley
- J. LCP Land Capability & Natural Hazards
- K. LCP Habitats & Resources
- L. Biological ResourcesM. Appealable Areas
- N. Adjacent Parcels
- O. Fire Hazards Zones & Responsibility Areas
- P. Special Flood Hazard Areas
- Q. Wetlands
- R. Ground Water Resources
- S. Estimated Slope
- T. Western Soil Classifications
- U. Lands in Williamson Act Contracts
- V. Farmland Classifications
- W. Timber Production Map

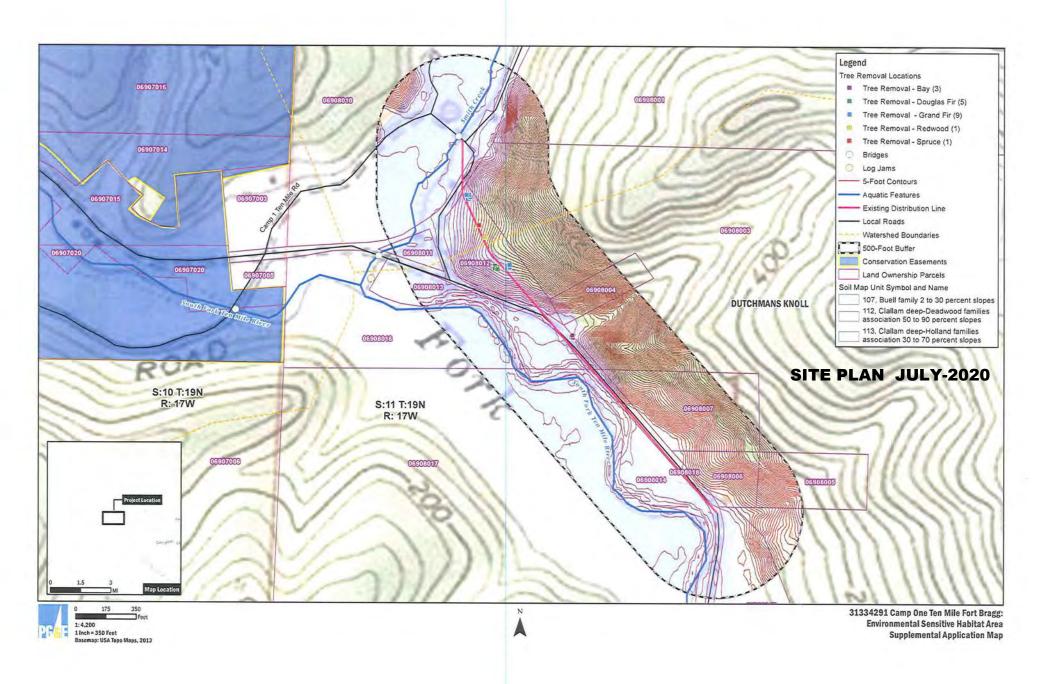












ATTACHMENT F

