

**RECEIVED**

By James Feenan at 9:03 am, Nov 05, 2024

**From:** [Cathy Brown](#)  
**To:** [pbscommissions](#)  
**Subject:** Low Intensity Camping  
**Date:** Tuesday, November 5, 2024 8:10:06 AM

**Caution:** This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

#### Low-Impact Camping Zoning Allowances in Mendocino County

Board of Supervisors,

Greetings from 27 year resident of Mendocino County, California and retired teacher. I am Cathy Brown, a first generation off-grid homesteader, organic farmer, and Williamson Act landowner.

I am writing to ask that you prioritize "low-impact camping" as part of the county's zoning code update in a way that does not financially exclude residents who are struggling to hold onto ownership of their land. Providing a minimal application fee would allow folks like us to participate and support ourselves. Low-impact camping through apps like Hipcamp & Tenrr can provide benefits to not only land owners in helping us to remain landowners, it can bring a substantial amount of tourism to the county as well as transient occupancy taxes.

With a continual flow of transient occupancy taxes, the county will benefit much more than if they exclude us through unrealistic fees preventing folks from even starting. Let us use this opportunity to forge an old-school bond between residents and the county. The county bends a little to provide access for most if not all land owners, and the landowners collect and pay transient occupancy taxes.

As homesteaders, we do our best to generate income from our lifestyle and products we grow and produce here on the homestead. We are always looking for ways to diversify our income. Low-impact camping and homestead tourism can be just the addition we need to sustain our existence here, while benefitting the county. Currently, Mendocino County is financially exclusive in allowing low-impact camping, as they require use permits with a non-refundable \$8000.00 application fee that doesn't include the use permit fee.

Agritourism and Homestead Tourism, through low-impact camping, can provide diversity to our income that we need to afford the next phase of our lives as land owners here. Private land owners like ourselves tend to provide a more educational experience than just a campground, and have a vested interest in the upkeep and maintenance of their land.

People will pay to camp on our property, tour our off-grid homestead, do the wild-flower and plant identification walk, hike along the trails, and eat from our gardens. Tourists are all about experiences these days, and being able to provide an organic experience at our homestead can be a win-win for land owners and the State of California!

We are able to bring people to Mendocino County from all over the world using camping apps like Hipcamp & Tenrr that have a global reach, a camper rating system that keeps land hosts in check, and an insurance policy for land owners. Agritourism coupled with ecotourism can provide us with an actual sustainable income. We won't have to sell our property in a panic because we will be supporting ourselves, bringing tourists to Mendocino County, and generate transient occupancy taxes. Our dilemma is that we and many other land owners in the county are unable to afford to get started with helping ourselves.

Mendocino County's financially exclusive policy and permits have been preventing us from participating in this new income possibility for us and the county. We are being forced to list our beloved homestead to leave the country in search of a life we can afford.

Please enable Mendocino County land owners like myself may afford to support ourselves, contribute to the county with occupancy taxes and participate and share our lifestyles and properties to visitors of our community in a healthy, safe, and responsible way.

Points from the last meeting I would like to address:

- Bring limit of campsites up from 1. Associate # of sites to property size.
- Allow pit toilets.
- Do not allow trash cans in wilderness areas, as they attract predators, mostly bears and raccoons. Garbage facilities also attract birds like ravens and jays that spread it throughout the forest to attract more wildlife and downgrade the property. Pack-it-in Pack-it-out.
- Allow sites to have campfires if running water at the site and must follow California State and Mendocino County Fire Bans

Thank you,  
Catherine Brown  
4000 Ft Bragg Rd  
Willits, CA 95490