



COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

For the meeting of: 1/15/2026

File #: 26-34

To: Planning Commission

From: Planning and Building Department

Agenda Section: Public Hearing

SUBJECT:

Natura Blue, Inc. Conditional Use Permit

Assessor's Parcel Numbers: 210-062-007; 210-054-008; 210-071-001

Record Numbers: PLN-12003-CUP

Larabee Valley Area

A Conditional Use Permit for 36,256 square feet of existing outdoor commercial cannabis cultivation supported by a 3,600 square foot ancillary nursery. Estimated annual water usage is 364,900 gallons. Irrigation water is sourced from a rainwater catchment pond and a permitted well. Water storage consists of a 1,343,000-gallon pond and 42,600 gallons in hard tanks. Processing, including trimming is proposed to occur onsite. Power is provided by generators with a proposal to transition to solar with generators reserved for emergency use only.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That the Planning Commission:

1. Adopt the resolution, (Attachment 1) which does the following:
 - a. Adopt the Mitigated Negative Declaration prepared for the Natura Blue, Inc. project pursuant to section 15074 of the State CEQA guidelines; and
 - b. Finds the proposed project complies with the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance; and
 - c. Approves the Natura Blue, Inc. Conditional Use Permit subject to the conditions of approval (Attachment 1A); and
 - d. Adopt the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program.

DISCUSSION:

Project Location: This project is in the Larabee Valley area on the south side of State Highway 36,

approximately 1.56 miles west from the intersection of China Mine Road and State Highway 36 and further described as Assessor's Parcel Numbers 210-071-001, 210-062-007, and 210-054-008 on the properties known to be in Sections 23, 26 and 27, Township 01 North, Range 04 East.

Present General Plan Land Use Designation: Agricultural Grazing (AG), Timberland (T), 2017 General Plan, Density: 40-160 acres per unit, Slope Stability: High Instability (3).

Present Zoning: Agricultural Exclusive (AE), Timber Production Zone (TPZ).

Environmental Review: An Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration has been prepared pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Statute (Public Resources Code 21000-21189) and Guidelines (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Division 6, Chapter 3, Sections 15000-15387).

State Appeal: Project is NOT appealable to the California Coastal Commission.

Major Concerns: None.

Monitoring Required: Annual Compliance Monitoring.

Executive Summary:

A Conditional Use Permit for 36,256 square feet of existing outdoor commercial cannabis cultivation supported by a 3,600 square foot ancillary nursery. Estimated annual water usage is 364,900 gallons. Irrigation water is sourced from a rainwater catchment pond and a permitted well. Water storage consists of a 1,343,000-gallon pond and 42,600 gallons in hard tanks. Processing, including trimming is proposed to occur onsite. Power is provided by generators with a proposal to transition to solar with generators reserved for emergency use only.

This application is one of six that are proposed by different entities on the same legal parcel, which is 812 acres in size. If all six applications are approved a total of 5.29 acres of cultivation would be permitted on this property. This is consistent with the provisions of Sections 314-55.4.8.2.1.1 of the CMMLUO and 314-55.4.6.1.2.c of the CCLUO which allow for up to 43,560 (one acre) of cultivation area per 100-acre increment on parcels 320 acres of larger in size. A complete description and analysis of all proposed applications is included in the Draft Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration (Attachment 3).

If approved this project will be subject to the performance standards of the CCLUO. Using available data, the applicant provided an analysis demonstrating the pond and catchment area are adequate to provide annual irrigation water even in a drought year. In tandem with the permitted groundwater well, there is sufficient irrigation water for the project. Use of the groundwater well will not impact public trust resources. The applicant has provided documentation demonstrating enrollment in State Water Board General Order No. WQ 2019-0001-DWQ. The Division of Environmental Health

recommended conditional approval.

As proposed and conditioned, the project is consistent with CCLUO performance standards and California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) guidance and will not negatively affect the northern spotted owl or other sensitive species. The project is adequately setback from surface waters and no fill is proposed. Comments from CDFW have been considered and incorporated into the conditions of approval. A noise assessment established baseline values and were the basis of the property line noise standards discussed further below.

Access is taken from State Highway 36, which is publicly-maintained. A condition of approval requires documentation demonstrating that the encroachment is developed in accordance with Caltrans standards. No new grading is proposed or authorized to implement the project and no timber conversion is associated with the proposed project. CalFire responded to the referral with no comment. The project is within the Bridgeville Fire Protection District and there is sufficient area for emergency vehicle turnarounds and a dedicated water source for fire protection. The project is also conditioned to include the standard inadvertent discovery protocol regarding tribal cultural resources. The project, if approved, would be consistent with Humboldt County Board of Supervisors Resolution No. 18-43.

An Initial Study / Mitigated Negative Declaration (SCH 2025111157) was circulated from November 26 to December 26, 2025. No public comment was received.

Water Resources: Annual water usage is estimated at 364,900 gallons (10.06 gallons per square foot) from a rainwater catchment pond and a permitted groundwater well (18/19-0066) located on the project parcel. Per the Operations Plan, the pond is approximately 1,343,000 gallons in capacity. There are another 39,600 gallons of tanks for irrigation and another 3,000 gallons dedicated to fire suppression.

The applicant provided a rainwater catchment analysis (**Appendix 6 ISMND**). The analysis concludes that in the driest rainfall years approximately 350,000 gallons can be collected. Combined with the groundwater well (Well #6) (40.436944, -123.7058816), there is sufficient irrigation water for the proposed project. The applicant provided a geologic analysis of the groundwater well (**Appendix 5 ISMND**) conducted by a Geologist. This analysis concluded that the well is hydrologically disconnected from surface waters. The project is conditioned to require water metering and monthly water usage logbooks which must be kept and made available during annual inspection (**Condition of Approval A4**). There is also a spring located on the project parcel. The applicant has a registered water right to use the spring (**Attachment 4A**). Though the water right allows use of the diversion for irrigation, the operation will only use water from the spring for domestic type uses such as handwashing since all irrigation water will come from the pond and groundwater well (**Condition of Approval B4**). Per the Operations Plan, the applicant has installed an irrigation system that utilizes drip emitters with a flow rate of 0.5 gallon per emitter. All irrigation water will be regulated by battery operated timers that will

irrigate the planted areas for 3 to 6 minutes every morning and evening, based on weather and plant needs.

The project is subject to the State Water Board General Order No. WQ 2019-0001-DWQ. The applicant has provided documentation demonstrating enrollment (**Attachment 4B and 4C**).

The project referral to the Division of Environmental Health (**Attachment 5A**) resulted in a recommendation of approval with conditions. Seasonal cultivation areas may be supported by portable toilets. If portable toilets are used, records must be kept and made available upon request during annual inspections (**Condition of Approval B3**).

The project site has an active Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement (LSAA) (1600-2018-0571-R1) (**Attachment 4D**). The project is conditioned to comply with the terms of the LSAA (**Condition of Approval C16**). Consultation with CDFW indicates that the applicant is operating in compliance with their LSAA.

Public Trust Analysis: Mule Creek is approximately 1,200 feet to the east, southeast of the project area. An unnamed tributary of Little Larabee Creek is approximately 1,300 feet to the west. Though neither of these surface waters are mapped within the California Natural Diversity Database as providing habitat for listed species or sensitive communities, the water flows provided could contribute to public trust resources further downstream within the watershed. However, given the elevation of the project area and an analysis conducted by a Geologist, there is no hydrologic connection between the groundwater well and these surface waters. Therefore, use of the well for irrigation will not impact public trust resources.

Biological Resources: A review of the California Natural Diversity Database does not indicate the presence of species or sensitive communities of concern. The nearest mapped Northern Spotted Owl activity centers are (HUM0125) approximately 1.2 miles to the northwest and (HUM0061) approximately 1.9 miles to the southeast. A Northern Spotted Owl survey was also conducted (**Appendix 13 ISMND**) with negative sightings. A raptor survey was conducted (**Appendix 12 ISMND**). Per mitigation measure BR-1 nesting bird surveys are required for any construction or development occurring between February 1 and August 31 (**Condition of Approval A5**). Additional mitigation measures include BR-2 Bullfrog Management, BR-3 Invasive Species Management, and BR-4 Generator Sound Attenuation. These are included in the conditions of approval. The applicant has provided a Bullfrog Management Plan (**Attachment 4E**) and an Invasive Species Management Plan (**Attachment 4G**) and must follow them for the life of the project (**Conditions of Approval B13 and B14**).

A wetland delineation and an aquatic resources delineation (**Appendices 3 and 4 ISMND**) were conducted. All project areas are sufficiently setback from the mapped resources. A Biological Assessment and Botanical Survey were conducted (**Appendices 10 and 11 ISMND**). The assessment

and survey concluded that no significant impact would occur if the project were implemented as designed. All recommendations from the assessment and survey have been implemented (e.g. raptor and NSO surveys) or are incorporated into the conditions of approval (e.g. preconstruction surveys during the nesting season).

The proposed project will utilize the pre-existing disturbed areas or clearings in existence prior to baseline. The project has been conditioned to ensure supplemental lighting associated with the nursery adheres to Dark Sky Association standards including security lighting (**Condition of Approval C3**). Permit conditions of approval also prohibit using synthetic netting for erosion control (**Condition of Approval B11 and C5**), ensure refuse is contained in wildlife-proof storage (**Condition of Approval C6**), and prohibit use of anticoagulant rodenticides to further protect wildlife (**Condition of Approval C8**). Additionally, any noise sources are limited to 50dB at 100 feet or forest edge, whichever is closer (**Condition of Approval C2**). As proposed and conditioned, the project is consistent with CCLUO performance standards and CDFW guidance and will not negatively affect the Northern Spotted Owl or other sensitive species.

Prime Soils: The project is for existing cultivation and is not located within any areas mapped as prime soils.

Noise: A noise assessment was provided (**Appendix 7 ISMND**). In accordance with the noise performance standards of the CCLUO, noise emissions are limited to 3dB above ambient noise levels. Therefore, based on the measurements reported in the noise assessment, the limits on noise are incorporated as a condition of approval (**Condition of Approval C2**) as follows:

- 58dB at the eastern property line;
- 51 dB at the northern property line;
- 45dB at the western property line; and
- 43dB at the southern property line.

If more than one noise standard applies, the more restrictive standard shall be used.

Energy: Power is provided by Solar with generators reserved for emergency use only (**Condition of Approval B5**).

Access: The project parcels are accessed from State Highway 36, which is publicly maintained. The permit is conditioned to require documentation from Caltrans demonstrating the encroachment from Highway 36 is compliant with applicable standards. (**Condition of Approval A8**). The Operations Plan states there will be up to three employees during peak operations. The site plan depicts sufficient parking spaces. The internal road network of the project parcels are privately maintained and do not serve any other parcels.

Geologic Suitability: The project parcel is mapped in the County GIS as high instability. The existing cultivation is in areas mapped as 0 - 30% slope. No new grading is proposed or authorized to

implement the project (**Condition of Approval B2**). The project is conditioned to obtain after the fact grading permits for the pond (**Condition of Approval A7**).

Timber Conversion: Review of aerial imagery and the project materials indicate that no timber conversion is associated with historic cultivation operation or the proposed project. The project is in an area mapped as very high fire hazard severity. CalFire responded to the project referral with No Comment. If a Registered Professional Forester determines tree removal is needed to protect structures associated with cannabis operations, the structure(s) will either need to be moved to comply with appropriate distances or the structure(s) removed and the cultivation converted to full sun cultivation techniques to avoid any timber conversion (**Condition of Approval B6**).

Security and Safety: Per the project Operations Plan, access to the parcel is gated and locked and surveillance systems are in use and a caretaker is present. The Site Plan provided by the applicant shows adequate space for emergency vehicle turnaround and water storage dedicated to fire suppression. The project parcel is within the Bridgeville Fire Protection District.

Tribal Consultation: The project was referred to the Northwest Information Center and the Bear River Band of the Rohnerville Rancheria. Regional tribes were also invited to consult on the project through the AB52 process. No tribes requested consultation. The site was visited multiple times by the Bear River THPO. A Cultural Resource Investigation conducted by Archaeological Research and Supply Company was provided. The study recommended the standard inadvertent discovery protocol which has been included as a condition of approval (**Condition of Approval C1**).

Consistency with Humboldt County Board of Supervisors Resolution No. 18-43: Approval of this project is consistent with Humboldt County Board of Supervisors Resolution No. 18-43 which established a limit on the number of permits and acres which may be approved in each of the County's Planning Watersheds. The project site is in the Van Duzen Planning Watershed, which under Resolution 18-43 is limited to 425 permits and 146 acres of cultivation. With the approval of this Conditional Use Permit, the total approved permits in this planning watershed would be 139 permits and the total approved acres would be approximately 48.1 acres of cultivation. If all six proposed projects on the subject property are approved, the total number of approved permits in this planning watershed would be 144 permits and the total approved acres would be approximately 52.56 acres of cultivation.

Environmental Review: Staff prepared a thorough environmental analysis which included the preparation of an IS/MND pursuant to the CEQA Statute (Public Resources Code 21000-21189) and Guidelines (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Division 6, Chapter 3, Sections 15000-15387). With the proposed mitigations, any potential project impacts are reduced to below significant levels. The IS/MND was circulated for 30 days and the department did not receive any public or agency comment on the environmental document.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

The project was sent to responsible agencies and all responding agencies have either replied with no comments, comments, or recommended approval or conditional approval (**Attachment 5**).

ALTERNATIVES TO STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. The Planning Commission could elect to add or delete conditions of approval. The Planning Commission could deny approval if unable to make all the required findings. Staff have concluded the required findings in support of the proposal as conditioned can be made. Consequently, Staff does not recommend further consideration of these alternatives.
2. The Commission could also decide the project may have environmental impacts that would require further environmental review pursuant to CEQA. Staff did not identify any potentially significant unmitigable impacts.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Draft Resolution
 - A. Conditions of Approval
2. Location Map
3. ISMND
 - A. Mitigation Monitoring Report
 - B. Appendix 1 Site Plans
 - C. Appendix 2 Operations Plans
 - D. Appendix 3 Wetland Delineation
 - E. Appendix 4 Aquatic Resources Delineation Report
 - F. Appendix 5 Well Analyses
 - G. Appendix 6 Rainfall Catchment Analyses
 - H. Appendix 7 Noise Assessment
 - I. Appendix 8 Less Than Three Acre Conversion Mitigation Plan
 - J. Appendix 9 Relocation and Restoration Plan
 - K. Appendix 10 Biological Assessment
 - L. Appendix 11 Botanical Survey
 - M. Appendix 12 Raptor Survey
 - N. Appendix 13 Northern Spotted Owl Survey
4. Applicant's Evidence in Support of the Required Findings

- A. Water Right Certificate
- B. Notice of Applicability
- C. Site Management Plan
- D. Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement
- E. Bullfrog Management Plan
- F. Invasive Species Plant Management

5. Referral Agency Comments and Recommendations

- A. Division of Environmental Health
- B. California Department of Fish and Wildlife
- C. CalFire

Applicant:

Natura Blue, Inc.
Zhan Hristovski
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Bridgeville CA 95526

Owner:

4 Wheel Properties LLC
PO Box 202
Carlotta CA 95528

Agent:

None.

Please contact Steven A. Santos, Senior Planner, at sasantos@co.humboldt.ca.us or (707)268-3749 for questions about this scheduled item.