

**RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION  
OF THE COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT**

**Resolution Number: 23-**

**Record Number: PLN-13160-CUP**

**Assessor's Parcel Number: 522-032-011**

**Resolution by the Planning Commission of the County of Humboldt certifying compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act and conditionally approving the Three Creeks Holdings, LLC, Conditional Use Permit.**

**WHEREAS**, Three Creeks Holdings, LLC provided an application and evidence in support of approving a Conditional Use Permit for an existing 20,000 square foot outdoor commercial cannabis cultivation operation; and

**WHEREAS**, the lead agency, prepared an Addendum to the Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) prepared for the Commercial Medical Land Use Ordinance (CMMLUO) adopted by the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors on January 26, 2016. The proposed project does not present substantial changes that would require major revisions to the previous Mitigated Negative Declaration. No new information of substantial importance that was not known and could not be known at the time was presented as described by §15162(c) of CEQA Guidelines; and

**WHEREAS**, the Humboldt County Planning Commission held a duly-noticed public hearing on October 19, 2023 and reviewed, considered, and discussed the application for a Conditional Use Permit and reviewed and considered all evidence and testimony presented at the hearing.

**Now, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Planning Commission makes all the following findings:

- 1. FINDING:**                    **Project Description:** A Conditional Use Permit for 10,000 square feet of existing mixed light and 10,000 square feet of existing outdoor commercial cannabis cultivation supported by a 1,650 square foot nursery. Estimated annual irrigation water usage is 189,000 gallons and is sourced from a groundwater well. There is 7,500 gallons of existing water storage and staff is recommending an additional 87,000 gallons of water storage for a total of 94,500 gallons of irrigation water storage. Processing occurs offsite at a licensed facility and power is provided by generators supplemented by solar. The proposal includes onsite relocation and restoration of historic cultivation areas.

**EVIDENCE:**    a) Project File: PLN-13160-CUP

- 2. FINDING:**                    **CEQA.** The project complies with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act. The Humboldt County Planning Commission has considered the Mitigated Negative Declaration

previously adopted for the Commercial Medical Marijuana Land Use Ordinance as well as the Addendum to the Mitigated Negative Declaration that was prepared for the project pursuant to Section 15164 of the CEQA guidelines.

- EVIDENCE:**
- a) Addendum prepared for the proposed project.
  - b) The proposed project does not present substantial changes that would require major revisions to the previous MND. No new information of substantial importance that was not known and could not be known at the time was presented as described by §15162(c) of CEQA Guidelines.
  - c) A Site Management Plan (SMP) showing compliance with the State Water Board Cannabis General Order for Waste Discharge. Conditions of approval require the applicant to adhere to and implement the recommendations of the SMP and maintain enrollment in the State Cannabis Cultivation Policy for the life of the project.
  - d) The project is for pre-existing cultivation. The nearest spotted owl activity center is approximately 1.6 miles to the west and additional owl activity centers are further from the site. The applicant's request and staff recommendation to eliminate artificial light from cultivation areas will reduce any potential ongoing impacts below what existed under baseline conditions prior to 2016. Use of the generator is subject to the standard condition limiting noise to 50dB at 100 feet from the generator or at the edge of the nearest forest habitat, whichever is closer. As proposed and conditioned, the project is consistent with CMMLUO performance standards and CDFW guidance and will not negatively affect the northern spotted owl or other sensitive species.
  - e) A Cultural Resources Investigation prepared for the project did not identify any resources on the subject site.
  - f) A Road Evaluation Report concludes the route leading to the subject parcel is developed to the equivalent of a category 4 road standard, is in good condition, and does not have any evidence of a site-specific safety problem.

#### **FINDINGS FOR CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT**

- 3. FINDING:** The proposed development is in conformance with the County General Plan, Open Space Plan, and the Open Space Action Program.

- EVIDENCE:** a) General agriculture is a use type permitted in the Timberland (T) land

use designation. The proposed cannabis cultivation, an agricultural product, is within land planned and zoned for agricultural purposes, consistent with the use of Open Space land for managed production of resources. The use of an agricultural parcel for commercial agriculture is consistent with the Open Space Plan and Open Space Action Program. Therefore, the project is consistent with and complimentary to the Open Space Plan and its Open Space Action Program.

**4. FINDING:** The proposed development is consistent with the purposes of the existing Timberland Production Zone (TPZ) zone in which the site is located.

- EVIDENCE:**
- a) The Timberland Production Zone (TPZ) zone is intended to be applied to areas of the County in which primary uses include the growing and harvesting of timber and timber production facilities, including portable processing equipment. Compatible uses other than the direct growing, harvesting, and portable processing of timber include grazing and other agricultural uses.
  - b) All accessory agricultural uses are principally permitted in the TPZ zone.
  - c) Humboldt County Code section 314-55.4.8.2.2 allows cultivation of up to 43,560 square feet of existing outdoor cannabis cultivation and up to 22,000 square feet of existing mixed-light commercial cannabis on a parcel over 1 acre subject to approval of a Conditional Use Permit and a determination that the cultivation was in existence prior to January 1, 2016. The application for 20,000 square feet of outdoor cultivation on a 200-acre parcel is consistent with this and with the cultivation area verification prepared conducted by staff. The Humboldt County Code does not authorize any new or expanded cultivation within the TPZ zones and as a result only the 20,000 SF of existing cultivation and 1,650 square feet of propagation may be permitted.
  - d) All cultivation is over 200 feet from all property lines and there are no public parks, churches, school bus stops or other sensitive receptors within 600 feet of the cultivation areas.

**5. FINDING:** The proposed development is consistent with the requirements of the CMMLUO Provisions of the Zoning Ordinance.

- EVIDENCE:**
- a) The CMMLUO allows existing cannabis cultivation to be permitted in areas zoned TPZ (HCC 314-55.4.8.2.2).
  - b) The parcel was created in compliance with all applicable state and

local subdivision regulations, as it was created through a Notice of Merger and associated Certificate of Subdivision Compliance (2010-12077)

- c) The project will obtain water from a non-diversionary groundwater well, an eligible water source.
- d) A Road Evaluation Report found the access roads to be functionally appropriate for the expected traffic.
- e) The slope of the land where cannabis will be cultivated is less than 15% and on existing flats.
- f) The cultivation of cannabis will not result in the net conversion of timberland.
- g) The location of the cultivation complies with all setbacks required in Section 314-55.4.11.d. It is more than 30 feet from any property line and more than 600 feet from any school, church, public park, or Tribal Cultural Resource.

**6. FINDING:**

The continued cultivation of 20,000 square feet of outdoor cannabis cultivation and the conditions under which it may be operated or maintained will not be detrimental to the public health, safety, or welfare or materially injurious to properties or improvements in the vicinity.

**EVIDENCE:**

- a) The site is located on road that has been found to safely accommodate the amount of traffic generated by the proposed cannabis cultivation.
- b) The site is in a rural part of the County where the typical parcel size is over 40 acres and many of the land holdings are very large. The proposed cannabis will not be in a location where there is an established neighborhood or other sensitive receptor such as a school, church, park, or other use which may be sensitive to cannabis cultivation. Approving cultivation on this site and the other sites which have been approved or are in the application process will not change the character of the area due to the large parcel sizes in the area.
- c) Irrigation water will come from a groundwater well, an eligible water source that has been evaluated and determined by staff to have no hydrologic connection to surface water nor will impact public trust resources.

- d) Provisions have been made in the applicant's proposal to protect water quality and thus runoff to adjacent property and infiltration of water to groundwater resources will not be affected.

**7. FINDING:** The proposed development does not reduce the residential density for any parcel below that utilized by the Department of Housing and Community Development in determining compliance with housing element law.

**EVIDENCE:** a) The parcel was not included in the housing inventory of Humboldt County's 2019 Housing Element but does have the potential to support one housing unit. The approval of cannabis cultivation on this parcel will not conflict with the ability for a residence to be constructed on this parcel.

**8. FINDING:** 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.

**EVIDENCE:** a) The project site is in the Lower Trinity Planning Watershed, which under Resolution 18-43 is limited to 169 permits and 58 acres of cultivation. With the approval of the projects the total approved permits in this Planning Watershed would be 62 permits and the total approved acres would be approximately 26.87 acres of cultivation. If all the supply Creek projects on the agenda were to be approved there would be a total of 73 permits and 34 acres of cultivation.

**DECISION**

**NOW, THEREFORE**, based on the above findings and evidence, the Humboldt County Planning Commission does hereby:

- Adopt the findings set forth in this resolution; and
- Conditionally approves the Conditional Use Permit for Three Creek Holdings, LLC subject to the conditions of approval attached hereto as Attachment 1.

Adopted after review and consideration of all the evidence on October 19, 2023.

The motion was made by COMMISSIONER \_\_\_\_\_ and second by COMMISSIONER \_\_\_\_\_ and the following ROLL CALL vote:

AYES:           COMMISSIONERS:  
NOES:           COMMISSIONERS:  
ABSENT:        COMMISSIONERS:  
ABSTAIN:       COMMISSIONERS:  
DECISION:

I, John Ford, Secretary to the Planning Commission of the County of Humboldt, do hereby certify the foregoing to be a true and correct record of the action taken on the above-entitled matter by said Commission at a meeting held on the date noted above.

\_\_\_\_\_  
John Ford, Director  
Planning and Building Department