



COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

For the meeting of: 4/3/2025

File #: 25-441

To: Planning Commission

From: Planning and Building Department

Agenda Section: Consent

SUBJECT:

Cottrell Ranch LLC, Buck Mountain Ranch Zone Reclassification
Assessor Parcel Numbers (APN) 210-101-014-000, 210-102-004-000, 210-103-003-000, 210-104-001-000, 210-105-001-000, 210-106-002-000, 210-117-020-000, 210-123-001-000, 210-124-001-000, 210-131-001-000, 210-131-003-000, and 210-132-001-000

Record No.: PLN-2024-19093

Bridgeville area

A Zone Reclassification (ZR) to rezone approximately 2127.6 acres of the Cottrell Ranch LLC's Buck Mountain Ranch into Timberland Production Zone (TPZ). The lands are currently zoned Agriculture Exclusive (AE). These lands have been managed as timberlands and harvested periodically from 1968 up to 2017 under various Timber Harvest Plans.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That the Planning Commission:

1. Adopt the resolution, (Attachment 1) which does the following:
 - a. Makes all the required findings for approval based on evidence in the staff report and public testimony; and
 - b. Recommend the Board of Supervisors approve the Zone Reclassification.

DISCUSSION:

The applicant requests a Zone Reclassification to rezone approximately 2,127.6 acres on 12 parcels. The project proposes changing the zoning from Agriculture Exclusive (AE) into Timberland Production Zone (TPZ). 12 parcels are included in the project. The parcels, acreages and current zoning classifications are shown in Table 1. The parcels have a total acreage of 3,156.2 acres. After the proposed zone reclassification all parcels will be fully rezoned to TPZ.

The applicant proposes managing the entire 3,135.5-acre land holding for timber production and conservation. The rezone is in the public interest and is consistent with General Plan policies. The purpose of this re-zoning is to protect timber production which is a key part of the county's economy. The rezone conforms the zoning to the existing and intended future land use of timber production. The rezone is consistent with the required findings for the zone reclassification, as well as the findings required under Section 312-50.8, Supplemental Timberland Production Zoning Procedures, and is consistent with the Forest Taxation Reform Act of 1976. The Forestry Review Committee reviewed the project at their meeting on February 28, 2025, and recommended approval of the project described in the Petition to Rezone (**Attachment 2**) by a unanimous vote. The minutes of the Forestry Review Committee are attached (**Attachment 3A**). The Petition to Rezone documents how the zone change meets the standards specified in California Government Code Section 51113.5. Per the petition, the areas to be rezoned meet the definition of timberland described in Sections 51104(f), (g) and (h) of the California Government Code. The petition states that based on an air photo and field review the lands to be rezoned can grow an average annual volume of wood fiber of at least 15 cubic feet per acre. The initial recorded timber harvest occurred in 1968, and the timber has been harvested intermittently since then. Several Timber Harvest Plans (THPs) have been filed on the ranch in the past 20 years; 01-434HUM, 07-134HUM and 13-018HUM. A THP on the eastern portion of the property is in development and planned for 2025. Additionally, portions of the Buck Mountain Ranch are to be included in a CALFIRE Forest Health Grant proposal in partnership with the Bureau of Land Management and Butte Creek Ranch, which if granted would include approximately 1,000 acres of forest stand improvement treatments, fuel breaks, and oak restoration on the property.

Table 1: Cotrell Ranch LLC, Buck Mountain Ranch Rezone Parcels

APN	Current Zoning	AE Acres	Total Parcel Acreage	Timber Category
210-101-014-000	AE	89.6	119	White Woods III
210-102-004-000	AE	170.3	240	White Woods IV
210-103-003-000	AE	126.7	252	White Woods IV
210-104-001-000	AE	582.2	634	White Woods IV
210-105-001-000	AE	286.6	384	White Woods IV
210-106-002-000	AE	18.1	40	White Woods III
210-117-020-000	AE	6.2	80	White Woods III
210-123-001-000	AE	526.7	669	White Woods IV
210-124-001-000	AE	182.5	446	White Woods IV
210-131-001-000	AE	36.8	68.5	White Woods III
210-131-003-000	AE	1.4	70	White Woods III
210-132-001-000	AE	100.6	133	White Woods IV
Total to be rezoned to TPZ:		2127.6	3135.5	

Referral agencies have been contacted for their comments and all responding agencies have either recommended approval, raise no objections, or provided no comment. Based on the on-site inspection, a review of Planning Department reference sources, and comments from referral agencies, planning staff believes that the applicant has submitted evidence in support of making all the required findings for approval of the Zone Reclassification.

Project Location: The project site is in the Bridgeville area, on the east side of State Highway 36, approximately 1.8 miles south of the intersection of State Highway 36 and Burr Valley Road, on the property located in Sections 19, 20, 21, 27, 28, 29, 30, 32, 33 & 34 T1N, R5E and Sections 3, 4 and 5, T1S, R5E, Humboldt Base & Meridian.

Present General Plan Land Use Designation: Agriculture Grazing (AG), Timber (T) 2017 General Plan; Density: Unidentified; Slope Stability: Low to High Instability (D).

Present Zoning: Agriculture Exclusive (AE), Timberland Production Zone (TPZ).

Environmental Review: Planning staff believe that the project, as conditioned, has no potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. The project can be found statutorily exempt from CEQA pursuant to Section 15264 which states: "Local agencies are exempt from the requirement to prepare an EIR or negative declaration on the adoption of timberland preserve zones under Government Code Sections 51100 et seq. (Gov. Code, Sec 51119)."

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

Major concerns: None.

Monitoring Required:

None.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

The project was referred to responsible agencies and all responding agencies have either responded with no comment or recommended approval or conditional approval. (Attachment 3)

ALTERNATIVES TO STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. The Planning Commission could elect not to recommend approval of the project. This alternative should be implemented if your Commission is unable to make all of the required findings. Planning staff is confident that the required findings can be made and does not recommend further consideration of this alternative.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Draft Resolution
 - A. Zone Classification Map
2. Petition to Rezone to Timber Production Zone
3. Referral Agency Comments and Recommendations
 - A. Forestry Review Committee Minutes

Applicant:

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Owner:

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Agent:

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Please contact Andrew Whitney, Planner, at awhitney2@co.humboldt.ca.us or 707-268-3735 if you have questions about this item.