



COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

For the meeting of: 12/18/2025

File #: 25-1432

To: Planning Commission

From: Planning and Building Department

Agenda Section: Consent

SUBJECT:

Dyerville Bar Surface Mining Permit
Assessor Parcel Numbers (APN) 211-141-003
Record No.: PLN-2025-19191
Weott area

A 15-year reapproval of a recently expired Conditional Use Permit (CUP-09-092XX/PLN-13823-SMA) and Surface Mining Permit (SMP-01-92X) including a Reclamation Plan (RP-01-92X) for surface mining on a gravel bar on the Eel River. The project is for extraction and storage of gravel from the river bar for use in County Road maintenance activities in the region. This proposal is extraction of up to 28,000 cubic yards of gravel every three years, as frequently as annually for 15 years. Skimming is the preferred method of extraction, but the extraction volume, location and extraction method will be based on the recommendations of CHERT and other regulatory agencies. Access to the site is from Dyerville Loop Road via the existing haul road located on the west side of the bar. Equipment used for extraction include bulldozer or excavator, front-end loader, and dump trucks. Extraction activities will occur between September 16 and November 1 to avoid the northern spotted owl and marbled murrelet nesting periods and to ensure completion of work before the winter rainy season. A portable crusher assembly will be temporarily located adjacent to the existing stockpile area. Crushing activities will avoid nesting periods.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That the Planning Commission:

1. Adopt the resolution, (Attachment 1) which does the following:
 - a. Finds the Planning Commission has considered the Subsequent Mitigated Negative Declaration (SMND) previously adopted for the Dyerville Bar reapproval pursuant to Section 15164 of the CEQA guidelines and that no further environmental review is required; and

- b. Makes all of the required findings for approving the Conditional Use/Surface Mining Permits and Reclamation Plan PLN-2025-19191, based on the substantial evidence submitted; and
- c. Approves the Conditional Use/Surface Mining Permit and Reclamation Plan.

DISCUSSION:

Project Location: The project is located in the Weott area, on the east side of Dyerville Loop Road, approximately 312 feet east from the intersection of Dyerville Loop Road and Vinnum Road, on the property known to be in the Northeast 1/4 of Section 26 Township 01 South Range 02 East.

Present General Plan Land Use Designation: Agriculture Exclusive (AE). Slope Stability: Low Instability (1).

Present Zoning: Unclassified (U).

Environmental Review: A Mitigated Negative Declaration was adopted with the original permit in 1993. A Subsequent Mitigated Negative Declaration was prepared for the modified project in 2009. No further environmental review is required as no changes to the mining operation are proposed as part of this reapproval.

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

Major Concerns: None

Monitoring Required: Annual Compliance Monitoring

Executive Summary: The project is for re-approval of Conditional Use Surface Mining Permit, approval of the Reclamation Plan and review of financial assurances for an existing in-stream mining operation on the Humboldt Redwood Company Co gravel bar on the Eel River at Dyerville. The gravel is to be used in County Road maintenance activities in the region.

Operations include excavation, sorting, crushing, and stockpiling with the average annual extraction amount not to exceed 28,000 cubic yards every three years. Original permits for this annual extraction volume were issued January 1993. The permit was renewed in 2009 and expired on January 5, 2023. The gravel bar has been intermittently and infrequently mined since 1994.

The Dyerville Gravel Bar is located 2.25 miles north of the community of Weott. The site is approximately 30 acres in size and is planned Agricultural Grazing and zoned Unclassified. Surrounding parcels are used mainly for grazing and timber production, with some rural residential use. The only other extraction site near the project area is to the east known as the PALCO Eel River

Gravel Bars. The site is accessed via the existing gravel bar access/haul road on the west side of the bar.

Skimming is the preferred extraction method for this site, based on extraction history and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) recommendations. Annual volume, location, and extraction method will be determined using the recommendations made by the County of Humboldt Extraction Review Team (CHERT) and other regulatory agencies. Equipment includes front-end loader, bulldozer or excavator, dump trucks, a portable rock crusher assembly, conveyors and a generator trailer. Crushed rock will be stockpiled on-site and then transported to another storage facility or construction site. Once crushing activities are completed, the crusher assembly will be dismantled and removed from the area.

Biological Resources: The project has potential for impact on plant and wildlife species. The California Natural Diversity Database contains records for five rare or sensitive plant species. Of these, the project area or vicinity may contain habitat for the *white-flowered rein orchid*. The flower has been found at the south end of the Northwestern Pacific Railroad Bridge on the gravel bar. It is likely that the gravel bar access road is located in orchid habitat. It will not be necessary to widen the gravel bar access road or remove vegetation from along the road. The project will not affect habitat for the flower.

The project will modify habitat for fish species known to inhabit the Eel River at and near the gravel bar. Annual extraction volume, location and method will be based on recommendations of CHERT, Department of Fish and Game, NMFS, Corps of Engineers, and other regulatory agencies.

The project vicinity contains habitat for northern spotted owls and marbled murrelets, and they may be found near the project area. The project does not involve removal of large trees and will not affect owl or murrelet habitat. Extraction activities are proposed to occur between September 16 and November 1 to avoid the northern spotted owl and marbled murrelet nesting periods and to ensure completion of work before the winter rainy season. Crushing activities will occur between September 16 and February 1 to avoid nesting periods. CDFW has recommended that the extraction activities be limited to September 16th through October 15th to avoid both NSO breeding and salmonid migration and this has been included as a condition of approval.

The project area and vicinity contain habitat for the *foothill yellow-legged frogs*; the project vicinity contains habitat for the *Sonoma Tree Vole*, *Ten Mile Shoulderband* and *Humboldt Marten*. Extraction activities are temporary. Limiting project activities to late summer and daylight hours will minimize impacts to wildlife in the project vicinity.

The project will be subject to extensive local, state, and federal regulation. In any given year, project extraction volumes, locations and methods will be submitted by the applicant for approval by local, state and federal agencies, including the County of Humboldt, Department of Fish and Game, CalFire,

Office of Mine Reclamation and the Army Corps of Engineers.

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) was referred this project on March 13, 2025. A response was received on March 28, 2025. Questions surrounding the stockpiles remaining in the 100-year flood plain was discussed as well as replanting during restoration and limiting the extraction to avoid NSO and MAMU breeding as well as avoid the start of the salmonid fall migration. While the stockpiles can not be relocated out of the flood plain as the entire parcel is in the flood plain, the replanting and amended operational window for gravel bar work have been included as recommended conditions of approval.

The actual and potential environmental effects reviewed by County staff and referral agencies in relation to the project include noise and hazards, traffic, dust, safety concerns, water quality degradation, impacts to sensitive habitat areas, and depreciation in open space aesthetics. Staff supports approval of the application because, as mitigated and conditioned, it is anticipated to have less than significant impact on the environment; and potential impacts to resources have been addressed through mitigation and operations restrictions. Based upon the operational and performance standards included in the mining operation and reclamation plan, staff and the referral agencies have concluded that the operation can be conducted in a safe and appropriate manner provided these standards are made conditions of project approval.

General Plan/Zoning: The property is designated as Agricultural Exclusive (AE) in the Humboldt County General Plan. This designation is both a resource production zone and an open space implementation zone. The extraction of minerals from the property is consistent with the intended use of the property for resource production and the end use, after reclamation will be open space consistent with the surrounding agricultural grazing land. The zoning of the property, Unclassified, allows surface mining subject to a Conditional Use Permit. The surface mine has been in operation for decades with no documented adverse impacts to public health, safety, or welfare.

Access: Access to the site is from Dyerville Loop Road, a county-maintained road that meets category 4 road standards, to Vinnum Road, a county roadway that basically starts at the subject property. It is proposed that operations at this site in any given year would begin on or about June 1st and cease no later than September 30th or sooner if high water occurred earlier than expected. Since access to the site is via an existing haul road, there is no need to remove any vegetation. Gravel will be extracted by skimming an area equal to approximately 4.5 acres to a depth of three to four feet. The equipment which will be used includes D-6 caterpillar, front-end loader, 10-yard dump trucks and portable crusher. In those years when no crushing is done, skimmed material will be loaded directly into 10-yard dump trucks and transported to a job site. The area involved in skimming 1,000 cubic yards will be less than one acre to a depth of one foot or less.

The County Department of Public Works has recommended that all private encroachments leading to a surface mining operation shall be adequately surfaced to prevent aggregate or other materials from

being drawn into the public way and that all haul roads and driveways shall be maintained as necessary to minimize the emission of dust and prevent the creation of a nuisance to adjacent properties. The project is conditioned to require the driveway to be paved the first 25 feet.

Geologic Suitability: The project site is in an area rated "low instability". The mining operation is required to comply with guidelines and requirements established by the California Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) and the Office of Mine Reclamation (OMR).

The types of rock and strata affecting the Dyerville site are composed of four geologic formations. The predominant formation located to the north, southeast and virtually surrounding the area is Upper Cretaceous marine sedimentary of the Yager formation composed of dark gray mudstone, shale, graywacke and conglomerate. To the east, within the watershed of influence, can be found middle and/or lower Pliocene marine sedimentary rocks of the Eel River formation which are composed of dark gray to black mudstone, silt stone, and glauconitic sandstone. To the south, outcrops of Tertiary Marine Sedimentary rocks of the Wildcat group can be found. These are composed of mudstone, siltstone, and sandstone. The streambed runs through Quaternary Non-Marine Terrace deposits of gravel, sand, and clay of the Rohnerville formation.

Security and Safety: Traffic control will consist of placing warning signs along Dyerville Loop Road in both directions on either side of the stockpile/gravel bar access road. It will not be necessary to detour or otherwise restrict traffic. Minor traffic delays may occur as vehicles slow down when they encounter trucks entering or exiting Dyerville Loop Road from the stockpile access road. Delays will be temporary, ending when extraction and reclamation activities are completed, and trucks/equipment leave the area. Following each extraction, the bar will be reclaimed, and all equipment removed. The area around the extraction will be graded to fill in depressions. Equipment and temporary stockpiles will be removed from the bar, and the haul roads will be scarified to reduce compaction. Dust control measures will consist of watering the access road, haul road, and extraction area(s) as needed with a water truck using an offsite water source or drafting from a temporary hole dug in the bar away from the low-flow channel.

A portable crusher assembly, consisting of jaw and cone crushers, conveyors, and a generator trailer will be temporarily located adjacent to the existing stockpile area. Gravel from the bar will be transported to the crusher via dump truck and/or front-end loader. Crushed rock will be stockpiled on-site or transported to another storage facility or construction site. Once crushing activities are completed, the crusher assembly will be dismantled and removed from the area.

Tribal Consultation: Archaeological and Historical Resources: The archaeological site map contained in the Environmental Data Bank were checked and revealed no known or recorded archaeological resources at this specific site.

The gravel bar is located on the Eel River. Mining operations were originally permitted in 1993. The

Pacific Railroad bridge at the north (downstream) end of the gravel bar was constructed in 1910. The bridge incurred damage in the 1964 flood and its spans and pier were replaced in 1965. The project will not affect the bridge. The Division of Natural Resources of the Humboldt County Department of Public Works has indicated that their database contains no recorded archaeological sites within the project area. The geology at the project site is not unique to the area nor is it a paleontological resource or site. There is no evidence that the project would impact archaeological resources.

Environmental Review: A Mitigated Negative Declaration was adopted January 5, 1993, with the original permit approval. A Subsequent Mitigated Negative Declaration was updated in 2009 during the reapproval of the permit.

Reclamation Plan: A reclamation plan was previously approved for the end use would remain in effect. There are no changes to the mining operation, permit boundary, extraction volumes, nor to the adopted end use. The reclamation plan is essentially implemented every year after operations, as it involves removing equipment and stockpiles and regrading the gravel bar to fill in large depressions. The surface mine has been idle since 1994 however Public Works wishes to retain the ability to utilize the site if the need arises for road maintenance and improvements in the vicinity. Post reclamation, the parcel would be utilized for public recreation.

The quarry would be subject to the original conditions of approval, and those that were added during the last permit reapproval in 2009 and any additional conditions added for the current reapproval.

Mining Permit Reapproval Standards: Because this permit had expired, the findings for approval are those required for approval of new surface mining operations. In addition to the required findings for all permits (Section 312-17.1), the County mining ordinance provides that mining permits may be approved for a period up to 15 years. Under §391-4(3) of the Code, the permit may be reapproved by the Planning Commission on the following bases:

1. The application and supporting documents adequately describe the proposed surface mining operation, and adequate measures are incorporated to mitigate the probable or known significant environmental effects which have been or may be caused by the proposed operation. The project has been reviewed by County Staff and outside agencies which have confirmed the operation has been designed to mitigate any environmental or health and safety concerns. The operation is inspected annually by County Planning staff for compliance with the Reclamation Plan and permit conditions. The last inspection report from November 2024 shows no violations or other issues.
2. The proposed use and location of the surface mining operation is properly located in accordance with the General Plan and any relevant element thereof to the community as a whole, and to other land uses in the vicinity. The location of the mining operation occurs in Agriculture Exclusive zone which is allowable with a Conditional use permit under the Current

General Plan. Affected agencies have reviewed the proposal and no new conditions of approval are proposed. There are no other known changes in the law or circumstances that warrant additions or changes to conditions that staff is aware of.

3. If the Planning Commission determines that the above findings cannot be made, it shall so state and deny the application. The project has been in operation for several decades with no noted issues and the Staff does not recommend denial at this time.

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. A referral received from The Humboldt County Public Works Department and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife provided comments, which have been incorporated into the analysis and recommended conditions of approval as appropriate.

ALTERNATIVES TO STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. The Planning Commission could elect not to approve the reapproval. This alternative is not recommended as the mining operation has been operated and maintained in good standing and no changes from the original approval are proposed.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Draft Resolution
 - A. Recommended Conditions of Approval
 - B. Reclamation Plan
 - C. Site Plan
2. Dyerville Bar (PALCO BAR) MND
3. Dyerville Plan of Operations (2009)
4. Referrals

Applicant:

Public Works County of Humboldt
1106 Second St
Eureka, CA 95501

Owner:

Humboldt Redwood Company LLC Co.
125 Main St,
Scotia, CA 95565

Agent:

Humboldt County DPW, c/o Danith Davis,
1106 Second St,
Eureka, CA 95501

Please contact Michael Kein, Planner, at MKein2@co.humboldt.ca.us or 707-268-3739 if you have questions about this item.