



# COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

For the meeting of: 11/7/2024

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File #: 24-1526

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**To:** Zoning Administrator

**From:** Planning and Building Department

**Agenda Section:** Consent

SUBJECT:

Native Humboldt Farm, Zoning Clearance Certificate and Special Permit  
Assessor Parcel Numbers (APN) 217-282-015  
Record No.: PLN-11454-ZCC  
Blocksburg area

A Zoning Clearance Certificate for 5,000 square feet of existing outdoor cannabis cultivation. Water is stored in 15 hard tanks (34,500 gallons) and the applicant proposes to add an additional two hard tanks (5,000 gallons) for a total of 39,500 gallons of available water storage. Estimated annual water usage is 41,000 gallons. All processing is completed at a licensed off-site processing facility. Electricity is sourced from PGE. Also requested is a special permit for the ongoing use of a point of diversion for the water for irrigation from an existing on-site spring.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That the Zoning Administrator:

1. Adopt resolutions (Resolution 24-\_\_) (Attachments 1) which does the following:
  - a. Finds the Zoning Administrator has considered the Mitigated Negative Declaration previously adopted for the Commercial Medical Marijuana Land Use Ordinance and the Addendum that was prepared for the Native Humboldt Farm project (Attachment 3); and
  - b. Finds the proposed project complies with the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance; and
  - c. Approves the Zoning Clearance Certificate and Special Permit subject to the recommended conditions of approval (Attachments 1A).

DISCUSSION:

**Project Location:** The project is located in the Blocksburg area, on both sides of Cemetery Road, at the intersection of Alderpoint Road and Cemetery Road, on the property known as 4 Cemetery Road.

**Present General Plan Land Use Designation:** Rural Community Center (RCC), Humboldt County General Plan (GP), No density requirement, Slope Stability: high Instability (3).

**Present Zoning:** Unclassified (U).

**Environmental Review:** An Addendum to a previously adopted Mitigated Negative Declaration has been prepared for consideration per §15164 of CEQA Guidelines.

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

**Major concerns:** None.

**Executive Summary:** A Zoning Clearance Certificate for existing 5,000 square feet of outdoor cannabis cultivation and a Special Permit for an agricultural diversion. This commercial cannabis activity is authorized by Section 314-55.4.8.2.2 of the CMMLUO. The application meets the requirements of zoning, size of cultivation area, setbacks from property lines and listed incompatible uses (e.g., schools), and is accompanied by the documentation, plans, descriptions, and agency clearances set forth in the CMMLUO.

The operation involves three cultivation cycles per year. Irrigation water is sourced from a deeded spring with the applicant adding a rain catchment system in three locations onsite. The total square footage for rain catchment is 1130 square feet. Onsite water storage amounts to 26,000 in hard tanks via hard tanks ranging in size from 1,000 gallons to 2,500 gallons. With an additional 2,500-gallon water tank dedicated to Cal Fire.

Drying and bucking will occur onsite while all other processing, including trimming, will be performed at a licensed third-party processing facility. Electricity is provided by PG&E and a back-up generator.

The road evaluation states that Widen the travel path of the road surface where possible to a minimum 18-feet in width. Drainage features including a rock-lined inboard ditch to convey seep flow are recommended to prevent continued scour of the road surface. The Department of Public Works has requested that the recommendations within the road evaluation be added as conditions of approval (Conditions A7)

**Water Resources:** Irrigation water is sourced from a deeded spring with the applicant adding a rain catchment system in three locations onsite. The total square footage for rain catchment is 1130 square feet. Onsite water storage amounts to 26,000 in hard tanks via hard tanks ranging in size from 1,000 gallons to 2,500 gallons. With an additional 2,500-gallon water tank dedicated to Cal Fire.

**Biological Resources:** Habitat for Northern Spotted Owl exists within approximately 0.72 mile of the project site, but as no generators are proposed the noise impacts on NSO from the project will be well below the thresholds that could cause disturbance of the species. The project site is within the area of obscure bumble bee (*Bombus caliginosus*); however, the siting was recorded in 1935.

**Energy:** Electricity is provided by PG&E and a back-up generator for emergency purposes only.

**Access:** The road evaluation states that Widen the travel path of the road surface where possible to a minimum 18-feet in width. Drainage features including a rock-lined inboard ditch to convey seep flow are recommended to prevent continued scour of the road surface. The Department of Public Works has requested that the recommendations within the road evaluation be added as conditions of approval.

**Geologic Suitability:** The project parcel is mapped in the County GIS as high instability. The existing cultivation is in areas ranging from 15% slope or less. No new grading is proposed to implement the project. After the fact grading permits are required for grading that was done previously without permits.

**Timber Conversion:** No timberland conversion is associated with this project.

**Security and Safety:** Access to the parcel is gated and locked. The parcel also contains a 2,500-gallon storage tank dedicated to fire suppression. The subject parcel is also located within the Alderpoint Volunteer Fire Company.

**Tribal Consultation:** The project was referred to Bear River Band of the Rohnerville Rancheria and Northwest Information Center; both requested a Cultural Resources Survey. A Cultural Resources Investigation was conducted by William Rich and Associates in January 2022. The report concludes that mineral sediments on the ground surface were observed over much of the parcel; however, the parcel has been disturbed in the past, with much of the surface impacted by roads, trails, gardens, or buildings. The report concludes no significant archaeological or historic period cultural resources, that for the purposes of CEQA would be considered an historical resource, exist in the subject parcel proposed for cannabis cultivation. One single ancestral Native American artifact was identified during the field survey, approximately 100 feet northeast of the cultivation area in the north-central part of the property. The artifact is a piece of flaked-stone debitage, an interior core-reduction flake of Franciscan chert. The standard inadvertent discovery protocol has been added as a condition of approval (condition B1).

**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 subject parcel resides within two watersheds, Lower Eel and Middle Main Eel. 4,040 square feet of cultivation resides within Lower Eel while 960 square feet is within Middle Main Eel. The project site is in the Middle Main Eel Planning Watershed, which under Resolution 18-43 is limited to 360 permits and 125 acres of cultivation. With the approval of the project the total approved permits in this Planning Watershed would be 106 permits and the total

approved acres would be approximately 44.68 acres of cultivation. The project site is also in the Lower Eel Planning Watershed, which under Resolution 18-43 is limited to 336 permits and 116 acres of cultivation. With the approval of the project the total approved permits in this Planning Watershed would be 79 permits and the total approved acres would be approximately 35.31 acres of cultivation.

**Environmental Review:** Environmental review for this project was conducted and based on this analysis, staff concludes that all aspects of the project have been considered in a previously adopted Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) that was adopted for the CMMLUO. Staff prepared an addendum (Attachment 3) to the MND for consideration by the Zoning Administrator.

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 5)

ALTERNATIVES TO STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. The Zoning Administrator could elect not to approve the project, or to require the applicant to submit further evidence, or modify the project. If modifications may cause potentially significant impacts, additional CEQA analysis and findings may be required. These alternatives could be implemented if the Commission is unable to make all the required findings.
2. The Zoning Administrator could also decide the project may have environmental impacts that would require further environmental review pursuant to CEQA. Staff did not identify any potential impacts. As the lead agency, the Department has determined that the project is consistent with the MND for the CMMLUO as stated above. However, the Commission may reach a different conclusion. In that case, the Commission should continue the item to a future date at least two months later to give staff the time to complete further environmental review.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Resolution
  - A. Conditions of Approval
  - B. Cultivation Operations Plan
  - C. Site Plan
2. Location Maps
3. CEQA Addendum
4. Referral Agency Comments and Recommendations

APPLICANT INFORMATION:

**Applicant**

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**File #:** 24-1526

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Native Humboldt Farms  
PO Box 597  
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**Owner**

John Obliskey  
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Arcata, CA 95518

**Agent**

N/A

Please contact Derek Wiles, Planner, at [dwiles@co.humboldt.ca.us](mailto:dwiles@co.humboldt.ca.us) or 707-268-3727 if you have questions about this item.