



COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

For the meeting of: 5/13/2025

File #: 25-577

To: Board of Supervisors

From: Planning and Building Department

Agenda Section: Public Hearing

Vote Requirement: Majority

SUBJECT:

Cottrell Ranch LLC, Buck Mountain Ranch Zone Reclassification proposes to change the zoning on 2,127.6 acres from Agriculture Exclusive (AE) into Timberland Production Zone (TPZ)

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That the Board of Supervisors:

1. Introduce the ordinance (Attachment 4) amending Section 311-7 of the Humboldt County Code by rezoning property in the Bridgeville Area by title and waive further reading; and
2. Open the public hearing, receive, and consider the staff report, the Planning Commission's recommendation and accept public comment; and
3. Close the public hearing; and
4. Adopt the resolution (Attachment 1) making all the required findings for approval; and
5. Adopt the ordinance (Attachment 4) to approve the Zone Reclassification of 2127.6 acres on 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; and
6. Direct the Clerk of the Board to Execute a Notice of Timberland Production Zone Status and give notice of the decision to Cottrell Ranch LLC, the Planning and Building Department, and any other interested party.

STRATEGIC PLAN:

This action supports the following areas of your Board's Strategic Plan.

Area of Focus: Sustainable Natural Resources & Infrastructure Stewardship

Strategic Plan Category: 5004 - Preserve agricultural and timber land

DISCUSSION:

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

Included with the application is a report from a registered professional forester (RPF) that documents how the property meets all the requirements of the California Government Code for rezoning into TPZ status. The Forestry Review Committee reviewed the proposed zone reclassification and the supporting materials on Feb. 28, 2025, and recommended approval by a vote of 7-0. On April 3, 2025, the project was included on the consent agenda at the Planning Commission duly noticed public hearing. The commission voted 6-0 to recommend that the Board of Supervisors approve the zone reclassification. Planning Commission Resolution 25-013 is included in this report as Attachment 4.

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 rezone conforms with the zoning of 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 County Code Section 312-50.8, Supplemental Timberland Production Zoning Procedures, and is consistent with the Forest Taxation Reform Act of 1976. 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 meets 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 square feet per acre annually. 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 2025-2026. 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. Details of the Timber Management practices on the 12 parcels are provided in the rezone petition (Attachment 2).

Referral agencies have been contacted for their comments and all responding agencies have either recommended approval 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.

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	

SOURCE OF FUNDING:

Applicant Fees - Planning and Engineering Services (1100277-608000)

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

The administrative cost of the zone reclassification does not impact on the General Fund. The applicant is responsible for paying all actual costs involved. If the Zone Reclassification is approved, there will be an impact on property tax revenue. The Humboldt County Assessor estimated that the property tax revenue after the rezone would be approximately \$11,120 less per year after the property is rezoned. Some of that tax revenue would be recouped through the timber yield tax when timber is harvested and sold.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

The project was reviewed by County Counsel and Department of Public Works.

ALTERNATIVES TO STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Board of Supervisors could elect not to approve the project. This alternative should be implemented if your Board 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. Resolution No. 25-__
2. Zone Reclassification Petition
3. Ordinance No. ____ Amending Section 311-7 of the Humboldt County Code by Rezoning Property in the Bridgeville Area.
4. Planning Commission Resolution 24-032
5. Forestry Review Committee Minutes
6. Draft Notice of Timberland Production Zone Status

PREVIOUS ACTION/REFERRAL:

Meeting of: April 3, 2025 - Planning Commission

File No.: 25-441