



# COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

For the meeting of: 8/7/2025

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File #: 25-908

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**To:** Zoning Administrator

**From:** Planning and Building Department

**Agenda Section:** Consent

**SUBJECT:**

Sue-Meg State Park Coastal Development Permit and Special Permit  
Record Number: PLN-2025-19250  
Assessor Parcel Number (APN): 517-111-001  
Trinidad

A Coastal Development Permit (CDP) for the drilling and installation of a new water well to serve Sue-Meg State Park. Two sites have been identified and if well site 1 is determined to be a reliable source of water, well site 1 will be developed and well site 2 will not be developed. If a reliable source of water is not found at well site 1, then a pilot hole will be drilled at well site 2. If reliable water is found at well site 2, then the well will be developed. If a reliable water source is found, Sue-Meg State Park will no longer need to rely on Penn Creek during the busy peak season to make drinking water. Minimal visual impacts are anticipated; however, a Special Permit is included for Design Review.

**RECOMMENDATION(S):**

That the Zoning Administrator:

Adopt the Resolution, (Attachment 1) which does the following:

- a. Makes all of the required findings for approval of the Coastal Development Permit and Special Permit based on evidence in the staff report and public testimony; and
- b. Approves the Coastal Development Permit and Special Permit as recommended by staff and subject to the conditions of approval (Attachment 1A).

**DISCUSSION:**

**Project Location:**

The project site is in the Trinidad area, on the east side of Patrick's Point Drive, approximately 2,200 feet southwest of the intersection of Patrick's Point Drive and the Highway 101 on/off ramp, on the

property known as 4150 Patrick's Point Drive.

**Present General Plan Land Use Designation:**

Public Recreation (PR). Trinidad Area Plan (TAP). Slope Stability: Moderate Instability.

**Present Zoning:**

Public Recreation (PR), with Combining Zones of Archaeological Resource Area (A), Design Review (D), Beach and Dune Area (B), Offshore Rocks and Rocky Intertidal Area (O), and Streams and Riparian Corridor Protection (R).

**Environmental Review:**

Project is exempt from environmental review per Section 15303 *New construction or conversion of small structures* of the CEQA Guidelines.

**State Appeal:**

Project is appealable to the California Coastal Commission.

**Major concerns:**

None.

**Monitoring Required:**

None.

**Executive Summary:**

A Coastal Development Permit (CDP) for the drilling and installation of a new water well in the Coastal Zone to serve Sue-Meg State Park as a secondary water source. The primary water source is from an existing well that was developed in 1985, which is unable to provide a sufficient amount of drinking water for the busy peak season in the State Park. Currently, the secondary water source is a surface draw from Penn Creek, which the State Park would like to abandon if another source can be found. Two potential well sites have been identified and if well site 1 is determined to be a reliable source of water, well site 1 will be developed and well site 2 will not be developed. If a reliable source of water is not found at well site 1, then a pilot hole will be drilled at well site 2. If reliable water is found at well site 2, then the well will be developed. If a reliable water source is found, Sue-Meg State Park will no longer need to rely on Penn Creek. Minimal visual impacts are anticipated; however, a Special Permit is included for Design Review.

**Air Quality:**

The proposed project is to drill and install a new well as a secondary water source to support the Sue-Meg State Park. Drilling and installing a new well is not anticipated to impact air quality.

**Biological Resources:**

The proposed project is to drill and install a new well as a secondary water source to support the Sue-Meg State Park. Two sites have been identified as having potential for reliable water. Both sites are located within previously disturbed areas. Well site 1 is mowed regularly and on a hillside. Well site 2 is through a seasonally inundated road used by PG&E. According to the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB), the 400-acre parcel is located within range of the Coastal Cutthroat trout, Southern Torrent salamander, Pacific Tailed frog, Humboldt Mountain beaver, Naked Flag moss, Sonoma Tree vole, and the Bristle-Stalked sedge. Provided by the applicant, botanical surveys were conducted using California Department of Fish and Wildlife's protocols for surveying and evaluating impacts to special status native plants and sensitive habitats. No sensitive species were identified within the proposed project locations. In addition, a State Parks biologist will conduct bird breeding surveys within the area of potential disturbance, should disturbance to vegetation be deemed necessary during bird breeding period (May 1- July 31, typically). As the proposed sites for both well test locations are within previously disturbed areas and no sensitive species or habitats were identified, the project is not anticipated to impact biological resources.

#### **Cultural Resources and Tribal Cultural Resources:**

The proposed project is to drill and install a new well as a secondary water source to support the Sue-Meg State Park. Two sites have been identified as having potential for reliable water. The proposed project was referred to the Big Lagoon Rancheria, Yurok Tribe, NWIC and the Trinidad Rancheria. No response was received. The proposed project requires minimal ground disturbance and is located within previously disturbed areas. Well site 1 is mowed regularly and on a hillside. Well site 2 is through a seasonally inundated road used by PG&E. Within the plan submitted by the applicant, cultural resource protection protocols will be in place prior to beginning work. The standard inadvertent discovery language is also included within the Conditions of Approval.

#### **Hazards and Hazardous Materials:**

The proposed project is to drill and install a new well as a secondary water source to support the Sue-Meg State Park. The proposed project location is not within an area of potential liquefaction, not within an area of mapped historic landslides, not within a flood zone or a tsunami hazard zone and not susceptible to coastal inundation. The subject parcel is within the State Responsibility Area for fire protection and within County Service Area Number 4 for fire response, with a Moderate Fire Hazard Severity level.

During the referral period of the proposed project, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (NCRWQCB) sent notification of a former Cleanup site over 1,000 feet away, but within the approximately 400-acre subject parcel. In 1988, an underground petroleum hydrocarbon tank that had evidence of leakage was removed. Cleanup and testing occurred up until June 7, 2023, when a "No further Action" letter was issued by NCRWQCB. After reviewing the proposed project with the NCRWQCB and the Humboldt County Department of Environmental Health, specific Conditions of Approval were added to identify and monitor for the presence of hazardous or contaminated materials that could be present in the new State Park water source. The State Park is also required by

the State government to regularly test and follow strict Best Management Practices guidelines to ensure the safety of the environment and the visitors. With additional proposed testing, monitoring and the Conditions of Approval, no hazards or hazardous materials are anticipated as a result of the project.

### **Hydrology and Water Quality:**

The primary water source for the Sue-Meg State Park is from a well that was drilled in 1985. During the busy peak summer season, the primary water source cannot entirely support all State Park activities. The secondary water source is a surface draw from Penn Creek. The proposed project is to drill and install a new well as a secondary water source to support the Sue-Meg State Park and not rely on Penn Creek any longer. Two sites have been identified as having potential for reliable water. During the project referral period, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (NCRWQCB) sent notification of a former Cleanup site, identifying the area as a potential source of contamination over 1,000 feet away. The documents show that in 1988, an underground petroleum hydrocarbon tank that had evidence of leakage was removed. Cleanup and testing have occurred up until June 7, 2023, when a “No further Action” letter was issued by NCRWQCB. After reviewing the proposed project with the NCRWQCB and the Humboldt County Department of Environmental Health, specific Conditions of Approval were added to identify and monitor for the presence of hazardous or contaminated materials that could be present in the new State Park water source. The State Park is also required by the State government to regularly test and follow strict Best Management Practices guidelines to ensure the safety of the environment and the visitors. State Park staff will follow the water quality testing as required by the NCRWQCB, work directly with the NCRWQCB to follow all mandated drinking water requirements, and therefore is not anticipated to significantly impact hydrology or water quality.

### **Noise:**

No significant noise impacts are anticipated with the proposed project. The drilling of each well site is expected to be completed within an 8-hour workday. There are no residences in the immediate vicinity and the site is within 300 feet of Highway 101. Should drilling occur during the typical bird breeding period (May 1 to July 31), a State Parks biologist will conduct breeding bird surveys within the area of potential disturbance and adjust the project as necessary.

### **OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:**

The project was referred to responsible agencies and all responding agencies have recommended approval or conditional approval. (Attachment 4)

### **ALTERNATIVES TO STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The Zoning Administrator could elect to add, modify or delete conditions of approval. Staff has concluded the required findings in support of the proposal can be made.

### **ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Draft Resolution
  - A. Conditions of Approval
  - B. Site maps
2. Location map
3. Applicant Evidence in support of findings
4. Referral agency comments and recommendations

**APPLICANT, OWNER, AGENT AND PLANNER INFORMATION:**

**Applicant**

State of California  
c/o John Miller  
3431 Fort Ave  
Eureka, CA 95503

**Owners**

None.

**Agent**

None.

Please contact Alice Vasterling, Associate Planner, at 707-268-3777 or by email at [avasterling@co.humboldt.ca.us](mailto:avasterling@co.humboldt.ca.us) <<mailto:avasterling@co.humboldt.ca.us>>, if you have any questions about the scheduled item.