



COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

For the meeting of: 10/5/2021

File #: 21-1446

To: Board of Supervisors

From: Planning and Building Department -- Drought Task Force

Agenda Section: Departmental

SUBJECT:

Monthly Report from Drought Task Force

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That the Board of Supervisors:

1. Receive the report from the Drought Task Force.

SOURCE OF FUNDING:

This update has been prepared out of Planning and Building 277 Budget Unit

DISCUSSION:

This is a report on the activities undertaken and information received by the Drought Task Force. The last report of the Drought Task Force was on Aug. 10, 2021. At that meeting the Task Force indicated an intent to provide monthly reports to the Board of important information and bring forward recommendations.

The good news is that there has been a small amount of precipitation in the month of September, but the conditions of drought persist. The task force initiated work on several important initiatives:

1. Permitting Standards for Water Wells. A contract has been entered into with LACO Associates to provide hydro-geologic consulting services to provide the following:
 - a. Guidelines for approving low impact wells and site-specific testing requirements for wells anticipated to have a higher impact
 - b. Database of existing well permits for use in county-wide studies and development of permanent standards
 - c. A decision matrix to determine whether wells are likely to fall into a high impact category or a low impact category with an appropriate set of protocols for each.

This contract is intended to address the existing well applications on file and to establish a set of

base line data for a more comprehensive set of studies for permanent well permitting regulations. The first two actions (a and b) will be completed by the end of October, 2021 and the decision matrix will be completed by the end of February, 2022.

2. 2021 Water Efficiency Workshop featuring Tasha McKee of Sanctuary Forest
On Sept. 28, 2021, DEH sponsored a workshop with Sanctuary Forest Water Program Director, Tasha McKee presenting an overview of strategies for addressing water scarcity along with lessons learned from projects implemented in the Mattole Headwaters. The focus was on impacts of water diversions for domestic, agricultural, and institutional use and the significant benefits of storage and forbearance (storing water from the wet season for use during the dry season).

The presentation highlighted opportunities including funding and collaborative tributary approaches, permitting and taxation obstacles at the local and state level along with the significance of land use impacts and restoration and stewardship practices for increasing infiltration and groundwater storage needed to keep streams flowing during the dry season.

In addition, there are several items that the Board of Supervisors should be aware of:

1. Letter from Randy Klein. Attached is a letter from Randy Klein, a hydrologist advocating for rainwater catchment instead of the use of wells. (Attachment 1)
2. Waterflow in Luffenholtz Creek. The graph in Attachment 2 shows Luffenholtz Creek has entered Stage 2 Drought with Mandatory Conservation.
3. Garberville Sanitary District. Due to the low flow of the Eel River the Garberville Sanitary District restricted use of Ag Meter users. Due to the two rainfall events during September the Eel River flow has returned to a level that allow Ag Meter users to receive water. The meters were restricted for a period of about a week.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

There is no financial impact to receiving this report.

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK:

This action supports your Board's Strategic Framework by enforcing laws and regulations to protect residents .

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

N/A

ALTERNATIVES TO STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

This is merely a report.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Letter from Randy Klein

2. Waterflow in Luffenholtz Creek

PREVIOUS ACTION/REFERRAL:

Board Order No.: I.2

Meeting of: July 20, 2021, and Aug. 10, 2021

File No.: N/A