



COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

For the meeting of: 12/18/2025

File #: 25-1437

To: Zoning Administrator

From: Planning and Building Department

Agenda Section: Consent

SUBJECT:

Mad River Estates LLC CUPs For Mixed Light Cannabis Cultivation.
Assessor Parcel Number (APN) 315-214-011
Record No.: PLN-12346-CUP
Korbel area

Denial of four Conditional Use Permits for four acres of mixed-light commercial cannabis cultivation, appurtenant nursery, and associated structures.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That the Zoning Administrator:

1. Adopt the resolution, (Attachment 1) which does the following:
 - a. Finds the Zoning Administrator has found the projects exempt from environmental review pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15270; and
 - b. Finds the applicant has not provided sufficient evidence necessary to make the required findings for approval; and
 - c. Denies the Mad River Estates LLC (PLN-12346-CUP) Conditional Use Permits.

DISCUSSION:

Project Location: The project is in the Korbel area, on the west side of Maple Creek Road, approximately 9.26 miles south from the intersection of Butler Valley Road and Maple Creek Road, on the property known to be in Sections 10, 11, 14 and 15 of Township 03 North, Range 03 East, Humboldt Base & Meridian.

Present General Plan Land Use Designation: Agriculture General (AG), Timber (T) Slope Stability: High Instability (3)

Present Zoning: Agriculture Exclusive with a special building site (AE-B-5(160)) and Timber Production Zone (TPZ)

Environmental Review: Exempt from environmental review pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15270 (Projects Which Are Disapproved).

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

Major Concerns: New property owner does not want the project on his parcel. Lack of evidence to support required findings for approval.

Executive Summary: Mad River Estates LLC PLN-12346-CUP Denial of four Conditional Use Permits for a total of four acres of mixed light commercial cannabis cultivation, ancillary propagation space, office facilities, restrooms, and parking for 24 employees. Electricity would be sourced from PG&E power brought to the site. The Humboldt County Planning Department has not had contact with the applicant since April 2019. The owner of the parcel has withdrawn the applicant's permission to access the site.

Summary Timeline of Project Processing: On December 23, 2016, an incomplete application package was received by the Department. The last contact with the applicant was in April 2019, when Director John Ford sent a letter to the applicant stating a requirement to prepare an Environmental Impact Report for the project. On August 12, 2022, an email from the property owner was received, stating that he was the authorized agent for the property owner and that they were withdrawing consent to allow cannabis cultivation on the property (**Attachment 2A**). On October 21, 2025, a letter was sent to the applicant, informing the applicant that consent for use of the property had been withdrawn and requesting the applicant to withdraw the permit (**Attachment 2B**). On November 19, 2025, a letter was sent to the applicant stating that the application has been scheduled for denial at the December 18, 2025, Zoning Administrator Meeting. (**Attachment 2C**). For the reasons described above, staff is recommending denial of the permit.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

The project was referred to the standard list of commenting agencies. With additional review of the project, it is evident that the project will require re-referral to make a recommendation of approval.

ALTERNATIVES TO STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Zoning Administrator could direct staff to continue to work with the applicant to resolve the outstanding issues and continue processing the application in accordance with HCC Section 312-4.1 et seq. However, due to the extended amount of time that the deficiencies have remained unresolved and the lack of responsiveness from the applicant, and the fact that the property owner no longer wants the project on his property, staff does not recommend this alternative.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Draft Resolution for Mad River Estates, LLC
2. Planning Department Correspondence
 - A. Email from property Owner
 - B. Project Denial Warning Letter sent October 21, 2025
 - C. Notice of Pending Project Denial letter

Applicant:

Mad River Estates
Jim Townsend
32123 Lindero Canyon Road
West Lake Village, CA 91361

Owner:

Hunter Ranch LLC
1157 Coast Village Rd #A
Montecito, CA 93108

Agent:

Praj White P.E., Senior Project Manager
NorthPoint Consulting Group, Inc.
P.O. Box 44
Eureka, CA 95501

Please contact Andrew Whitney, Planner, at awhitney2@co.humboldt.ca.us or 707-268-3754 if you have questions about this item.