



# COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

For the meeting of: 9/27/2022

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File #: 22-1252

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**To:** Board of Supervisors

**From:** Public Works

**Agenda Section:** Time Certain Matter

**SUBJECT:**

Approval of McKay Community Forest Trail Plan and Forest Stewardship Plan, Adoption of Trail Plan Initial Study and Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration of Environmental Impacts, and Approval of Memorandum of Understanding with Redwood Coast Mountain Bike Association

**RECOMMENDATION(S):**

That the Board of Supervisors:

1. Review the attached McKay Community Forest Trail Plan (“Trail Plan”) and the associated Initial Study and Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration (“Trail Plan IS/MND”);
2. Review the attached McKay Community Forest Stewardship Plan (“Forest Stewardship Plan”);
3. Review the attached Memorandum of Understanding (“MOU”) with Redwood Coast Mountain Bike Association for assistance with planning, construction, and maintenance of a mountain bike skills park and specified trails within the McKay Community Forest;
4. Receive a staff report and public comment regarding the attached plans and documents for the McKay Community Forest;
5. Approve, and authorize the Chair of the Board to execute, the attached resolution which takes the following actions:
  - a. Approve the Trail Plan;
  - b. Certify that the Trail Plan IS/MND has been prepared in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”) and setting forth findings of fact and evidence to support this action;
  - c. Certify that the Trail Plan IS/MND was presented to the Board of Supervisors and the Board of Supervisors has reviewed and considered the information contained in the IS/MND before approving the project;
  - d. Certify that the Trail Plan IS/MND reflects the county’s independent judgment and analysis;
  - e. Adopt the Trail Plan IS/MND;
  - f. Adopt the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program for the Trail Plan;
  - g. Direct Public Works to file a Notice of Determination for the Trail Plan IS/MND;
  - h. Approve the Forest Stewardship Plan;
  - i. Find that the Forest Stewardship Plan is exempt from CEQA as a planning study; and

- j. Direct Public Works to file a Notice of Exemption for the Forest Stewardship Plan.
6. Approve, and authorize the Public Works Director to sign, the attachment MOU with the Redwood Coast Mountain Bike Association; and
7. Provide guidance whether Public Works should initiate a process to consider changing the name of the McKay Community Forest.

SOURCE OF FUNDING:

Forest Resources & Recreation - McKay Community Forest (1710716)

DISCUSSION:

This agenda item transmits two planning documents related to the McKay Community Forest (“Community Forest”) for review and approval by the Board of Supervisors. The Community Forest is located southeast of Eureka within the watershed of Ryan Creek along the urban interface with Myrtle town, Cutten, and Ridgewood Heights. A map of the Community Forest is provided in Attachment 1.

The Community Forest was created in 2014 when the County of Humboldt acquired 997 acres of forestland from Green Diamond Resource Company, and then expanded in 2020 through the acquisition of an additional 197 acres, resulting in a total area of 1,194 acres. The Community Forest was established for multiple purposes including public access and recreation, timber harvest, and watershed and resource conservation.

***McKay Community Forest Trail Plan***

The McKay Community Forest Trail Plan (“Trail Plan”) provides a blueprint for the development of trails, access points, and amenities to support recreational and educational activities (Attachment 2). The Trail Plan describes the overall goals, objectives, guiding principles, design standards, and construction practices for building sustainable trails to support outstanding outdoor experiences for a diversity of trail users.

A parking area was constructed in Cutten along Northridge Road in 2018 to provide dedicated access to the Community Forest but has remained closed to the public pending formal opening of the Community Forest. The Northridge parking area will be the primary access point for the near future. Developing additional access points is challenging due to the limited connectivity to public roads and constraints from adjacent land use. Historically and currently, there has been significant informal access to the Community Forest (and Green Diamond’s adjacent forestland holdings) along Harris Street near Redwood Acres. The proposed development of a trailhead and formal set of trails near Harris Street will help separate trail users from vehicles. Further discussions with Redwood Acres will be needed to determine if access points to the Community Forest can be situated within the fairgrounds/event center. Opportunities were identified to establish access points near Redwood Fields, Manzanita Avenue, and Walnut Drive when larger undeveloped parcels are permitted for subdivision; however, the timeframe for these proposed access points is uncertain.

The Trail Plan proposes a trail network with 31 miles of multi-use roads, multi-use trails, hiking trails, and mountain bike trails. The Community Forest was divided into seven trail planning units based on

logical boundaries such as streams, ridges, or logging roads. Trails will be developed incrementally in a logical sequence over the course of several years. Connecting the northern and southern portions of the Community Forest will require securing an easement on the east side of the North McKay Ranch subdivision which surrounds Redwood Fields. Such an easement is incorporated into the proposed Development Agreement for the North McKay Ranch subdivision. The Trail Plan includes a proposed bike skills park that would be built by Redwood Coast Mountain Bike Association. The first trails to be officially open will be trails near the Northridge parking area. Additional trails will be officially opened as they are constructed and when they connect to appropriate access points.

Trail locations and alignments were selected based on standards for achieving “sustainable trails,” which are trails that support recreational use while preserving the integrity of the landscape and holding their form over time with limited maintenance. The Trail Plan describes standard practices for locating, designing, constructing, and maintaining sustainable trails. The most enduring trails are well-drained, properly sloped, resist erosion, blend with the surrounding area, and provide enjoyable and challenging experiences. These practices help prevent trail widening or formation of multiple threads and reduce incentives for short-cuts and renegade (unauthorized) trails.

The Trail Plan was prepared with an emphasis on accommodating users with disabilities and accessibility needs to the greatest extent possible. Key factors for accessible trails are achieving gradual slopes (where practicable with the natural terrain) and establishing a firm and stable surface. The Trail Plan adopts and applies the federal Accessibility Guidelines for Outdoor Developed Areas, published in 2013, as the technical guidelines to support accessible trail design within the Community Forest. The Trail Plan proposes a total of 1.5 miles of fully accessible trails and 0.7 miles of improved access trails.

The draft Trail Plan was released on Jan. 30, 2019, with a comment period ending March 1, 2019. A total of 85 comments were received during the comment period. Section 6 of the Trail Plan summarizes the comments by theme and provides responses. The final Trail Plan was released on Dec. 16, 2020.

An Initial Study and Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration (“IS/MND”) for the Trail Plan was prepared for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”). The IS/MND was prepared because the Trail Plan identifies specific trail locations and construction and maintenance activities which have the potential to result in physical changes in the environment. The IS/MND (dated June 2, 2022) is provided in Attachment 3.

The first version of the IS/MND was released on Dec. 16, 2020, for public review; however, this version was not adopted in order to incorporate additional information and refine the analysis of impacts. Revisions included incorporating additional information to address controllable sediment discharge sources, providing more specific information into the proposed action related to the R-1 road which leads to a private inholding (described further below), and expanding the analysis of transportation impacts. The revised IS/MND was re-released for a public review period from June 3, 2022, through July 5, 2022. A Notice of Intent to adopt the Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration was published in the June 5, 2022 edition of the Eureka Times-Standard.

### Tribal and Archeological Considerations

The Community Forest was traditionally occupied by the Wiyot people. A records review with the Northwest Information Center did not identify any designated historical, tribal cultural, or unique archaeological resources within the Community Forest. On Feb. 10, 2020, Public Works sent a letter to the Wiyot Tribe, Blue Lake Rancheria, and Bear River Band of the Rohnerville Rancheria pursuant to Public Resources Code § 21080.3.1 providing notification of the project and inquiring whether the tribes desired to request consultation regarding tribal cultural resources. On March 6, 2020, Public Works received an e-mail from Ted Hernandez, Wiyot Chairman and Cultural Director. Mr. Hernandez recommended adoption of inadvertent discovery protocols, which are incorporated as mitigation measures. Mr. Hernandez also expressed the Wiyot Tribe's interest in participating in any advisory committee for the Forest Stewardship Plan. On March 9, 2020, Public Works received an e-mail from Janet Eidsness, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer for the Blue Lake Rancheria. Ms. Eidsness expressed support for the Wiyot Tribe participating in the development of the Forest Stewardship Plan. In previous communications with the Natural Resources Department of the Wiyot Tribe, staff expressed the Wiyot Tribe's interest in ethnobotanical gathering around the Humboldt Bay region and noted that coho salmon are a culturally important species (Adam Canter, personal communication). Mr. Canter expressed interest in opportunities for cultural interpretation such as signs and displays.

### Special Provisions for the R-1 Multi-use Road

Public access to the Community Forest near Redwood Acres and Harris Street is complicated by the configuration of property lines and the presence of a privately-owned residential property (Assessor Parcel Number 017-071-002) within the Community Forest. A map depicting the proposed trail network in the northern portion of the Community Forest is provided in Attachment 4. The inholding property is accessed by vehicle from Harris Street on approximately 0.84 miles of logging roads owned by Green Diamond and the county. Specifically, the property is accessed across an approximately 0.31-mile portion of the R-Line road owned by Green Diamond; an approximately 0.32-mile portion of the R-1 road owned by Green Diamond; and an approximately 0.21-mile portion of the R-1 road owned by the county. The property owners hold a non-exclusive easement for the portions of the R-Line road and the R-1 road between Harris Street and the residence. The R-Line road and R-1 road are not open to the general public for vehicular travel. The R-Line road and the R-1 road have been used regularly by the public for many years to access the McKay Tract for hiking, biking, and other recreational uses.

The R-Line road segment between Harris Street and the junction with the R-1 road is not proposed as part of the Community Forest trail network because trails can be constructed to bypass this R-Line road segment. The topography of the land between the R-Line road and Redwood Acres is favorable for trails (i.e., flat or gradually sloped) and sensitive habitat areas can generally be avoided with minimal impacts.

The Trail Plan would designate a portion of the R-1 road (approximately 0.45 miles) as a multi-use road for hiking, biking, and equestrian use to connect the Redwood Acres trail unit with the North McKay trail unit in an area where the Community Forest is narrow and confined by sensitive areas. The R-1 road segment is proposed to connect to a new off-road trail that would extend up the hillside onto the North McKay Ranch subdivision to bypass the private inholding. The bypass trail is

contingent upon the county acquiring an easement under the proposed Development Agreement or by other means.

Green Diamond owns the northern segment of the R-1 road (approximately 0.32 miles) and Humboldt County owns the southern segment (approximately 0.21 miles). Humboldt County and Green Diamond have a reciprocal access agreement that applies to various roads, including the R-1 road. Condition 1(a)(iii) of the reciprocal access agreement specifies that the portion of the R-1 road owned by Green Diamond may be used by the general public for pedestrian, equestrian, and bicycle access purposes.

The “shared roadway” approach is appropriate for low-volume, low-speed roads such as the R-1 road. Under existing conditions (observed in May 2022), the width of the R-1 road ranges from approximately 9 to 15 feet, with a typical width of 10 to 12 feet, and with approximately three (3) wide-spots (pull-outs). The volume of vehicle trips on the R-1 road is low (approximately 10 to 20 one-way trips per day). Daily vehicle users include residents and visitors of the private inholding property. Occasional users include delivery vehicles and utility companies. Infrequent users include Green Diamond and Humboldt County personnel. The R-1 road will rarely, if ever, be used for timber operations.

Drivers on the R-1 road will be responsible for driving at safe speeds, operating their vehicle with regard for the safety of other users, and being attentive to pedestrians, cyclists, and equestrians. Special provisions for using the R-1 road as a multi-use road include the following:

1. Public Works will install a set of permanent signs to alert drivers that they need to control their speeds and share the road, and to alert pedestrians and cyclists that they need to be prepared for vehicles driving on the road.
2. A speed limit of 15 miles per hour on the R-1 road will be established when an ordinance for the Community Forest is adopted.
3. Public Works will periodically cut back road-side vegetation to improve sight distance. Periodic brushing and limbing is expected to result in a minimum road width of 12 feet, with a typical road width of 14 to 16 feet.
4. Public Works will implement traffic control with flaggers and temporary signs when using heavy equipment or extra-large vehicles on the R-1 road.
5. Public Works will offer to install a gate at the entrance to the private inholding property.

Provisions #1 and #3 would not be implemented until the bypass trail onto the North McKay Ranch property is constructed and the R-1 road is formally designated as ready for public use.

Alternatives to utilizing the R-1 road as a multi-use road were considered. However, the terrain and environmental conditions near the R-1 road were found to be incompatible with developing a new trail separated from the road. The R-1 road is situated at the bottom of a steep, forested hillslope with deep, incised stream channels (to the west and north) and along the edge of the Ryan Creek floodplain (to the

east and south). The alternative of developing a trail west and north of the R-1 road was considered. The majority of this area is not part of the Community Forest and thus the alternative presumes that the landowner would be willing to sell property or provide an easement. However, the terrain in this area is not suitable for constructing a new trail due to the steep slopes, unstable ground, incised stream channels, and the presence of the “Cutten Branch” stream which passes through a wide floodplain. The alternative of developing a trail east and south of the R-1 road on a fill prism or boardwalk within the Ryan Creek floodplain was also considered. However, this alternative would cause significant impacts to wetlands and would require a new crossing of the Cutten Branch stream. Both of these alternatives were rejected due to the magnitude of the environmental impacts that would be caused by constructing a new trail within sensitive habitat areas, compared to the proposed shared-use of an existing road.

The concept of widening the R-1 road and using paddle markers to designate a parallel lane for trail use at the edge of the road was considered at the request of the owners of the inholding property. In some locations the road could be widened with minimal environmental impact, but in other locations road widening would have significant impacts on wetlands. The primary deficiency of this concept is that it would most likely be ineffective because pedestrians and cyclists could easily bypass the parallel lane and utilize the full road width. Therefore, the alternative of paddle markers was rejected.

#### Mitigation Measures

The IS/MND identified 13 mitigation measures that will be incorporated into the project to ensure that environmental impacts are less than significant. The mitigation measures apply to biological resources, cultural resources, hydrology and water quality, and utilities. The mitigation measures are specified in the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program which is provided in Attachment 5.

#### Public Comments

Written comments received during the public comment period for the IS/MND are provided in Attachment 6. The Humboldt Trails Council expressed support for “light touch” trail-building and volunteer trail construction. The Humboldt Trails Council also emphasized the importance of considering future crosswalk enhancements on Harris Street near the Community Forest. The North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board transmitted comments that will be addressed as part of the Clean Water Act section 401 water quality certification process, which is separate from CEQA. This certification process applies to permitting of the 12 proposed bridges within the trail network. No revisions to the IS/MND were warranted based on the comments received.

Written comments received for the first version of the IS/MND (Dec. 16, 2020) are provided in Attachment F of the revised IS/MND. These commenters were notified when the public comment period for the revised IS/MND was initiated.

#### Opening of the Northridge Parking Area and Progressive Trail Opening

Considerable work is needed to build the trail network proposed in the Trail Plan. A number of informal trails (“social trails”) currently exist through the Community Forest; however, many of these trails are not linked to appropriate access points, are not situated in appropriate locations, and are in poor condition. Some of the informal trails can be improved, while others will need to be

decommissioned. Public Works has begun working with the Volunteer Trail Stewards to begin building and improving trails near the Northridge parking area in areas that are not environmentally sensitive. Public Works is ready to open the Northridge parking area and enable public access to the first set of designated trails within the Community Forest (approximately four (4) miles of trails), pending adoption of the Trail Plan IS/MND.

### ***Forest Stewardship Plan***

The Forest Stewardship Plan addresses non-recreation aspects of managing the Community Forest, including silviculture, fire risk reduction, habitat restoration, carbon sequestration, monitoring, and adaptive management (Attachment 7). The Forest Stewardship Plan describes existing conditions within the Community Forest, defines the management goals and objectives, presents the overall management approach, establishes guiding principles and conservation measures, and highlights the initial priorities. Together, the Trail Plan and Forest Stewardship Plan will serve as the guidance documents for managing the Community Forest through the next 10 to 15 years.

The draft Forest Stewardship Plan (dated April 22, 2022) was released for public comment through May 31, 2022. A total of 14 written comments were received during the comment period and two (2) additional comments were received shortly thereafter. Public Works retained Redwood Community Action Agency (“RCAA”) to assist with public engagement regarding the Forest Stewardship plan and RCAA developed a summary of the public engagement activities which is included in Attachment 8. Section 5 of the Forest Stewardship Plan summarizes the comments and provides responses. The final Forest Stewardship Plan was released on Sept. 13, 2022.

The Community Forest will be managed using principles of forest stewardship and ecological forest management. Forest stewardship is a general approach to forest management that aims to conserve all the forest’s resources, including wildlife, timber, soil, water, and recreational opportunities. Forest stewardship takes a long-term view and manages the land with a sense of service and responsibility for future generations. Ecological forest management relies on science-based strategies to integrate multiple environmental, economic, and social goals while sustaining the integrity of forest ecosystems and landscapes and reducing risks to the forest resources. Ecological forest management views forests as complex, diverse ecosystems providing a broad array of valuable services and products. The focus of ecological forestry is on the entire ecosystem and not just on the trees. Ecological forestry seeks to create forest ecosystems and landscapes that will be resilient to climate change.

The Community Forest occupies highly productive forestland. The dominant tree species within the forest is the coast redwood, an iconic and economically valuable species that is a major part of the North Coast’s natural and cultural heritage. Old-growth trees were cut over 100 years ago and since then the forest has been managed for short rotations of uniform, even-aged trees, which has simplified the forest structure and reduced habitat quality. Many of the stands are stocked with densely spaced trees exhibiting reduced growth rates due to shading. The desired future condition is a dynamic, healthy forest ecosystem with mixed-age trees and complex structure. The proposed management approach will shift the trajectory of the forest toward a composition with larger, older trees and more complex structural characteristics.

Timber harvesting will be implemented to provide consistent income and enable the Community Forest to be economically self-sustaining over the long term. An inventory of forest resources was developed to understand baseline stand compositions, timber volume, and standing carbon. The forest will be managed through uneven-aged management which involves thinning, single tree selection, and small group openings. The rate of harvest will average approximately 50 to 60% of annual tree growth. Harvests will be designed with an emphasis on enhancing structural complexity and creating stands with diverse age classes. Standing dead trees (snags) and live trees with unique and beneficial structural features will be retained. The age, size, and total volume of timber will increase over time, along with biomass and carbon sequestration. In addition to complying with the Forest Practice Rules and all applicable laws and regulations, the Forest Stewardship Plan identifies 10 voluntary conservation measures.

The Community Forest contains creeks and streams with high-quality habitat for salmonids and other aquatic species, including portions of lower Ryan Creek and Ryan Slough which serve as a valuable stream-estuary ecotone. Habitat for coho salmon is an especially important ecological asset of the Community Forest. Opportunities to benefit salmon by enhancing off-channel habitat have been identified and several restoration projects will be pursued. Historically, northern spotted owls have been active within the Community Forest although recently nesting sites have not been occupied consistently.

Roads are needed for timber harvest operations, restoration activities, maintenance, patrols, firefighting, and emergency response. Roads within the Community Forest are not public roads but are classified as timber operation roads or service roads. (The unique situation of the R-1 road was described earlier.) Road upgrades and new trail construction will be one of the most significant and expensive aspects of managing the Community Forest over the next 20 to 25 years. In general, the highest priority will be controlling sediment sources near fish-bearing streams, providing safe public access via a network of recreational trails, and development of a road network suitable for timber harvest operations. The Forest Stewardship Plan proposes to retain and upgrade 9.2 miles of existing logging roads for timber operations; construct 2.0 miles of new logging roads for timber operations; convert 1.8 miles of existing logging roads to service roads (no timber operations); and decommission 4.0 miles of existing logging roads and convert a portion of them to trails.

While redwood forests on the North Coast generally have high resilience to wildfire, drought, disease, and blowdown, there is still a need to actively manage risks. Key actions for managing wildfire risks include developing shaded fuel breaks adjacent to roads and neighborhoods, thinning over-stocked stands, managing the forest for increased tree size and spacing (less ladder fuels), upgrading the road network, carefully planning any managed use of fire, and restricting activities that could cause ignition.

The Forest Stewardship Plan is a planning study that provides the context for future decisions on proposed actions. This plan is, therefore, exempt from review under CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15262. The Forest Stewardship Plan is a companion document to the Non-Industrial Timber Management Plan (“NTMP”), which is a regulatory document developed to demonstrate compliance with the California Forest Practice Rules. The NTMP is a CEQA-equivalent



document that applies to timber harvest activities and management of logging roads. An NTMP was submitted to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (“CAL FIRE”) for review and approval on April. 21, 2022. CAL FIRE submitted a letter (dated April 28, 2022) which provides comments and requested revisions to the NTMP by CAL FIRE and other state reviewing agencies. Public Works is currently revising the NTMP and plans to re-submit the NTMP within the next two (2) to three (3) months. The first timber harvest is expected in the summer and early fall of 2023. Projects related to habitat restoration, wildfire risk reduction, and actions not analyzed in the NTMP or Trail Plan IS/MND will require analysis for CEQA compliance on a project-by-project basis as they are further specified.

### ***McKay Community Forest Advisory Group***

Public Works proposes to convene a seven-member McKay Community Forest Advisory Group (“Advisory Group”) to help guide the management of the Community Forest. The Advisory Group would include three (3) designated members (City of Eureka, tribal, Humboldt Trails Council) and four (4) at-large members. The four (4) at-large members would be selected by the Public Works Director through an annual application process. Applications for the Advisory Group would be posted in November 2022 and members would be selected in December 2022. The Advisory Group would meet approximately quarterly.

### ***Proposed Resolution***

Public Works recommends that the Board of Supervisors approve the attached resolution (Attachment 9) which would approve the Trail Plan, adopt the Trail Plan IS/MND, and approve the Forest Stewardship Plan.

### ***Memorandum of Understanding with Redwood Coast Mountain Bike Association***

Trail construction within the Community Forest will depend heavily on support from the Volunteer Trail Stewards program of the Humboldt Trails Council, the California Conservation Corps, the Redwood Coast Mountain Bike Association (“RCMBA”), and other community organizations.

On Feb. 25, 2020, the Board of Supervisors approved a Memorandum of Understanding (“MOU”) with the Humboldt Trails Council for implementation of the Volunteer Trail Stewards Program on county-maintained trails including trails within the McKay Community Forest.

RCMBA is a chapter club of the International Mountain Biking Association and is dedicated to promoting cycling and building and maintaining sustainable trails in the Northern California region. RCMBA represents the interests of over 400 members and has existing written agreements with other public and private landowners to develop and maintain trails. RCMBA brings extensive knowledge and expertise regarding the design features that make mountain bike trails fun, challenging, and inspiring.

The attached proposed MOU (Attachment 10) with RCMBA was modeled after the MOU with the Humboldt Trails Council. The MOU specifies roles and responsibilities, anticipated services, insurance requirements, indemnification provisions, and lines of communication. Public Works

recommends that the Board of Supervisors approve the proposed MOU with RCMBA.

### ***Potential Name Change***

Some of the public comments on the Forest Stewardship Plan requested that Humboldt County consider changing the name of the Community Forest. The name “McKay Community Forest” was adopted in 2014 because the forestland was part of Green Diamond Resource Company’s overall holdings within the McKay Tract. According to a historical profile of the McKay Tract prepared by Jerry Rohde in March 2014, Allan McKay was one of the owners of McKay & Co. which acquired forestland within the Ryan Creek watershed in 1875. McKay & Co. also owned the Occidental lumber mill along the Eureka waterfront. Allan McKay died in 1886 and his wife Rebecca McKay died in 1895. McKay & Co. sold its assets in 1952.

One commenter expressed that the name “McKay” is associated with a distant historical era and has limited contemporary significance. One commenter suggested appointing a committee representing a diversity of interests and perspectives to consider new potential names. Potential new names include “Eureka Community Forest,” “Humboldt County Community Forest,” and “Ryan Creek Community Forest.” However, some residents may feel a connection with the name “McKay” and prefer that the name remains unchanged.

If the Board of Supervisors provides direction to consider changing the name of the Community Forest, Public Works recommends (1) consulting with the Wiyot Tribe, Blue Lake Rancheria, and Bear River Band of the Rohnerville Rancheria; (2) consulting with the soon-to-be-formed Advisory Group; (3) conducting a public survey on naming preferences; (4) assessing the estimated cost of a potential name change, including replacement signs and logos; and (5) returning to the Board for further discussion and direction.

### **FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

The Community Forest was established based on the premise that the forest would be economically self-sustaining over the long-term without reliance on the Humboldt County General Fund. Continuation of a working forest, similar to the Arcata Community Forest, will enable financial viability. From a financial perspective, the Community Forest can be viewed as an economic asset that is managed similar to other public enterprises such as utility services, except those revenues are derived from periodic timber harvest rather than user fees or charges.

The county received full title to the property without the need for ongoing debt payments because the property that comprises the Community Forest was acquired with state and federal funds. Starting in 2014, the county has financed the initial planning and management of the Community Forest through an internal loan that will be paid off with future timber harvest revenues. Through Dec. 31, 2021, the loan balance for the Community Forest is \$508,545. Timber harvest revenues will be used to pay back the loan, fund the construction of trails and access points, and fund ongoing operation and maintenance. The approved budget for Fiscal Year 2022-23 (budget unit 1710716) contains sufficient funding to support the staff recommendations described above.

### **STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK:**

This action supports your Board's Strategic Framework by providing for and maintaining infrastructure and creating opportunities for improved safety and health.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

CAL FIRE

ALTERNATIVES TO STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. The Board could request further revisions to the Trail Plan, Trail Plan IS/MND, and/or Forest Stewardship Plan. This alternative is not recommended because Public Works believes the existing documents are complete and provide a sufficient framework for officially opening the first set of trails within the Community Forest for public use.
2. The Board could choose not to approve the MOU with RCMBA to develop the bike skills park and assist with trail-building. This alternative is not recommended because it will result in less public involvement with the Community Forest.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Map of the McKay Community Forest
2. McKay Community Forest Trail Plan (Dec. 16, 2020)
3. Initial Study and Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Trail Plan (June 2, 2022)
4. Map of the Proposed Trail Network near Redwood Acres and the Inholding Parcel
5. Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (June 2, 2022)
6. Comments on the Initial Study and Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration
7. McKay Community Forest Stewardship Plan (Sept. 7, 2022)
8. Forest Stewardship Plan Public Engagement Summary (June 13, 2022)
9. Resolution of the Board of Supervisors of the County of Humboldt approving the McKay Community Forest Trail Plan, adopting the Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration and the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program for the Trail Plan, approving the McKay Community Forest Stewardship Plan, and finding the Forest Stewardship Plan to be exempt from review under the California Environmental Quality Act
10. Proposed Memorandum of Understanding between Humboldt County and Redwood Coast Mountain Bike Association (Sept. 6, 2022)

PREVIOUS ACTION/REFERRAL:

Board Order No.: K-2

Meeting of: June 23, 2020

File No.: 20-726