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## **CULTIVATION SITE RELOCATION ASSESSMENT**

**APN: 208-341-015**

### **HUMBOLDT COUNTY**

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## SUMMARY

An assessment was conducted at APN: 208-341-015 near Dinsmore in Humboldt County on October 25, 2019 to evaluate an area where cannabis cultivation sites are planned to be relocated for sensitive biological and aquatic resources. The relocation area is in upland habitat with low potential for special status plants and wildlife and is outside of any wetland buffers or stream setbacks.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This report includes the results of an assessment for sensitive biological and aquatic resources at a cannabis cultivation relocation area at APN: 208-341-015. The applicant will move 6,384 square feet of existing cultivation area to a new location that is adjacent to an additional 3,600 feet of existing cultivation area higher on the ridge (Figure 1). The purpose of the study was to assess the potential for special status plants, wildlife, and natural communities, and identify any aquatic resources including wetlands and streams in or near the new cultivation area.

## 2. DEFINITIONS

### **Sensitive Biological Resources**

#### Special Status Species

Special status species include taxa that are listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and/or the California Endangered Species Act (CESA), in addition to species that meet the definition of rare or endangered under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). This includes plants with California Rare Plant Ranks (CRPR) of 1A, 1B, 2A, or 2B and CDFW Species of Special Concern (SSC) and Fully Protected (FP) and other species that warrant protection based on local or biological significance.

#### Special Status Natural Communities

Special status plant communities are communities with limited distribution that may be vulnerable to environmental impacts. Natural Communities recognized as sensitive are provided on the Sensitive *Natural Communities List* (California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) 2018). The list is based on the vegetation classification in *A Manual of California Vegetation, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition* (Sawyer et al. 2009). Natural communities with G or S ranks of 3 or lower are considered sensitive. However, they may not warrant protection under CEQA unless they are considered high quality. Human disturbance, invasive species, logging, and grazing are common factors considered when judging whether the stand is high quality and warrants protection.

### **Sensitive Aquatic Resources**

#### Waters of the United States

Waters of the United States are regulated by the U.S Army Corps of Engineers (Army Corps) under the Clean Water Act. Waters of the United States include, but are not limited to,

territorial seas, waters used for interstate or foreign commerce and their tributaries, and waters adjacent to the aforementioned, including wetlands.

Army Corps jurisdiction in waters such as creeks and rivers includes the area below the ordinary high water mark, which is the line on the bank established by fluctuations of water that leave physical characteristics such as a distinct line on the bank, shelving, destruction of terrestrial vegetation, and presence of debris.

The Army Corps defines wetlands as:

"...areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal conditions do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bogs, and similar areas."

#### Waters of the State

Waters of the state are regulated by the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) under the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act. Waters of the state are defined as:

"...any surface water or groundwater, including saline waters, within the boundaries of the state."

Waters of the State includes water in both natural and artificial channels.

The Water Board defines an area as wetland as:

*"An area is wetland if, under normal circumstances, (1) the area has continuous or recurrent saturation of the upper substrate caused by groundwater, or shallow surface water, or both; (2) the duration of such saturation is sufficient to cause anaerobic conditions in the upper substrate; and (3) the area's vegetation is dominated by hydrophytes or the area lacks vegetation."*

#### Streamside Management Areas

The Humboldt County General Plan (Humboldt County 2017) recognizes Streamside Management Areas (SMAs) along all streams, which are defined as:

"100 feet, measured as the horizontal distance from the top of bank or edge of riparian drip-line whichever is greater on either side of perennial streams."

"50 feet, measured as the horizontal distance from the top of bank or edge of riparian drip-line whichever is greater on either side of intermittent streams."

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### 3. ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

#### Project Location

The parcel is located off Cobb Road approximately 2 miles southeast of Dinsmore on the Dinsmore USGS quadrangle (Section 11, T1N, R5E) in Humboldt County (Figure 2).

#### Soil, Topography, and Hydrology

The soil type mapped in the relocation area is Hecker family deep, 35 to 50 percent slopes (United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resource Conservation Service 2019). The soil type is derived from metasedimentary rock. The soil, including its minor components, has a non-hydric soil rating. The parcel is on an approximately 30 % generally south facing slope. The relocation area is at approximately 2,900 feet above sea level. The parcel is approximately 1,500 feet from the Van Duzen River.

### 4. METHODS

The relocation area was evaluated for sensitive biological and aquatic resources by Kyle Wear, M.A., on October 25, 2019. Mr. Wear has over 20 years of experiences conducting botanical surveys and other biological work in northern California. Mr. Wear is trained in wetland delineation by the Wetland Training Institute and has been conducting wetland delineations for over 10 years.

#### Biological Resources

Lists of special status plants (Table 1) and wildlife (Table 2) that could potentially occur in the relocation area was generated by consulting the *California Natural Diversity Database* (CDFW 2019) and the *CNPS Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants* (California Native Plant Society 2019). The scoping lists includes special status plants and wildlife with documented occurrences on the Dinsmore USGS quadrangle or adjacent quadrangles.

#### Aquatic Resources

##### Wetlands

Federal, State, and County wetland delineation methods follow the *1987 Corps of Engineers Wetlands Delineation Manual* (Environmental Laboratory 1987) and the *Regional Supplement to the Corps of Engineers Wetland Delineation Manual Western Mountains, Valleys, and Coast Region (Version 2.0)* (Army Corps 2010). A positive wetland determination is made when all three wetland parameters (hydrophytic vegetation, hydric, soil, and wetland hydrology) are present.

##### Non-Wetland Waters

Non-wetland waters include watercourses with a bed, bank, and ordinary highwater mark in addition to ponds, lakes, and other waterbodies and any associated riparian habitat.

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## 5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The new cultivation area is in upland habitat on a dry ridge in and adjacent to a PG & E powerline corridor. The vegetation includes stands of coyote brush (*Baccharis pilularis*), deer brush (*Ceanothus integerrimus*), and young Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) trees. There is also open habitat with non-native grasses including (*Arrhenatherum elatius*) and dogtail grass (*Cynosurus echinatus*). Other common plants noted at the site include bracken fern (*Pteridium aquilinum*), English plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*), yellow star thistle (*Centaurea solstitialis*), and St. John's wort (*Hypericum perforatum*). Representative photos are provided in Appendix A.

The analysis provided in Tables 1 and 2 indicates the relocation area has low potential for most special status plants and wildlife. The area lacks rocky outcrops, serpentine soil, watercourses, wetlands, and other potential habitat for most rare plants. Many of the plants on the scoping list are associated with higher elevation habitat. The site also lacks features such as mature trees, snags, riparian habitat, ponds, caves, old structures, and other potential habitat for sensitive wildlife.

The new cultivation area is outside of any wetland buffers or stream setbacks required by the *Humboldt County General Plan* (Humboldt County 2017) or the *Cannabis Cultivation Policy* (State Water Resources Control Board 2019).

## 6. REFERENCES

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Figure 2. Location Map.

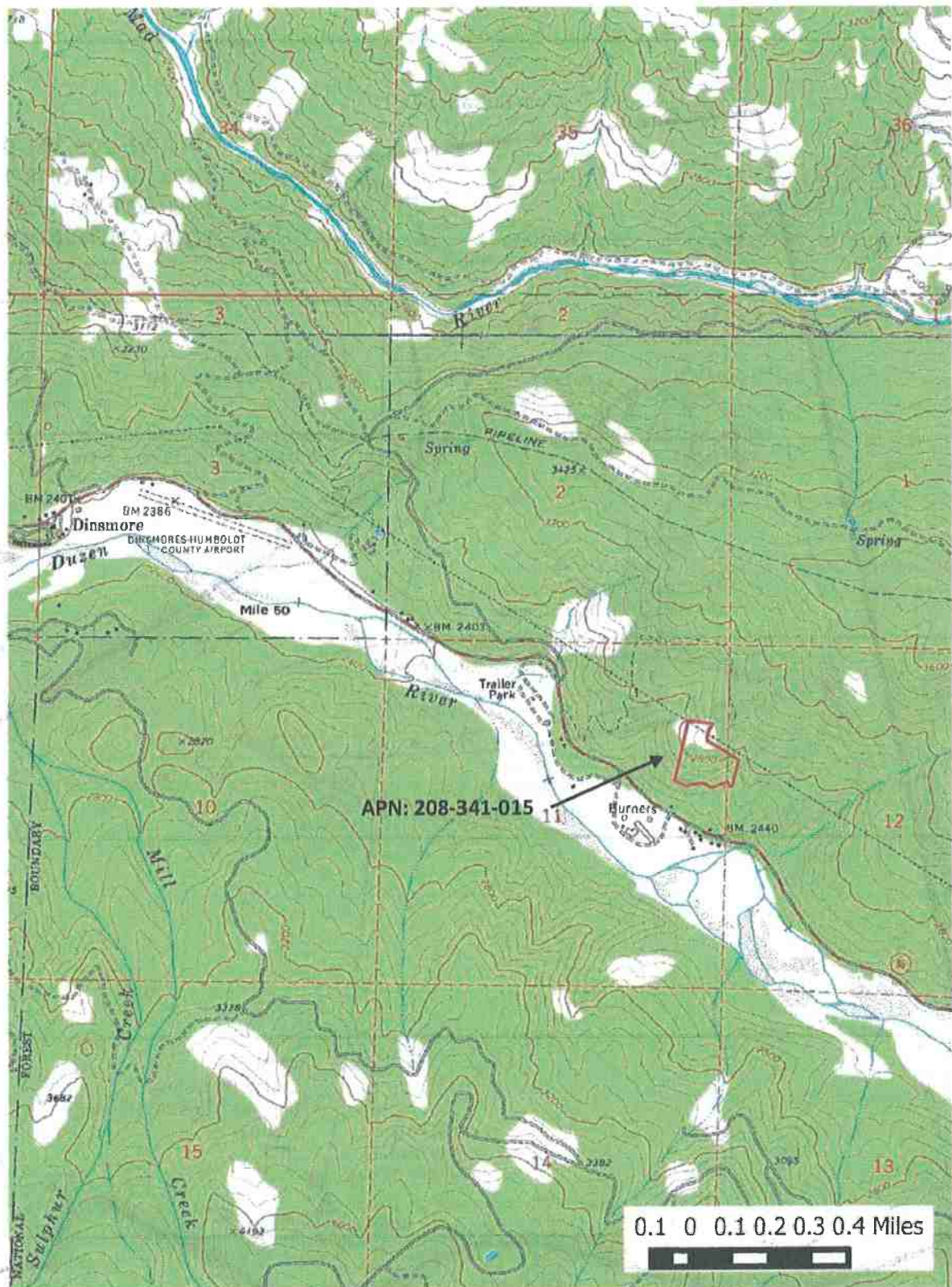




Table 1. Special Status Plant Scoping List.

Scientific Name	Common Name	Listing Status	Blooming Period	Habitat	Elevation (Feet)	Potential to Occur in Relocation Area
Anisocarpus scabridus	scabrid alpine tarplant	1B.3	(Jun)Jul-Aug(Sep)	Upper montane coniferous forest (metamorphic, rocky)	5410-7545	Unlikely. Occurs in higher elevation habitat.
Arctostaphylos manzanita ssp. elegans	Konocti manzanita	1B.3	(Jan)Mar-May(Jul)	Chaparral, Cismontane woodland, Lower montane coniferous forest, volcanic	1295-5300	Unlikely. RA lacks is not Chaparral, Cismontane woodland, Lower montane coniferous forest and lacks Volcanic soil.
Astragalus umbraticus	Bald Mountain milk-vetch	2B.3	May-Aug	Cismontane woodland, Lower montane coniferous forest, sometimes roadside	490-4100	Moderate. Potential in disturbed areas and roadsides.
Calycadenia micrantha	small-flowered calycadenia	1B.2	Jun-Sep	Chaparral, Meadows and seeps (volcanic), Valley and foothill grassland, Roadsides, rocky, talus, scree, sometimes serpentine, sparsely vegetated areas	15-4920	Unlikely. RA lacks all or most habitat components, maybe some potential in grassy areas.
Carex praticola	northern meadow sedge	2B.2	May-Jul	Meadows and seeps (mesic)	0-10500	Unlikely. RA lack suitable wetland habitat.
Epilobium oreganum	Oregon fireweed	1B.2	Jun-Sep	Bogs and fens, Lower montane coniferous forest, Meadows and seeps, Upper montane coniferous forest, mesic	1640-7350	Unlikely. Occurs in higher elevation mesic habitat.
Erigeron maniopotamicus	Mad River fleabane daisy	1B.2	May-Aug	Lower montane coniferous forest, Meadows and seeps (open, dry),	4180-4920	Unlikely. Occurs in higher elevation habitat.

Table 2 (Cont.). Special Status Wildlife Scoping List.

Scientific Name	Common Name	Listing Status			Habitat	Potential of Occur in Relocation Area (RA)
		Federal	State	CDFW		
Pekania pennanti	fisher - West Coast DPS	None	Threatened	SSC	Mature low to mid-elevation conifer and hardwood forests with	Unlikely. RA is not mature forest.
Taxidea taxus	American badger	None	None	SSC	Dry herbaceous, shrub, and forest habitat with friable soils.	Moderate. Some potential in stands of coyote brush and grassland.
<b>Mollusks</b>						
	Trinity bristle snail	None	Threatened	-	Riparian corridors and mixed-conifer forests with a deciduous understory. Well shaded canyons and benches with leaf mold layer at least four inches thick.	Unlikely. RA lacks well shaded area and riparian habitat.
<b>Reptiles</b>						
Emys marmorata	western pond turtle	None	None	SSC	Variety of waterbodies often with basking areas such as logs and wood debris and shaded shorelines.	Unlikely. RA is not near ponds or other waterbodies.

**CDFW LISTING STATUS**

**SSC:** Species of Special Concern  
**FP:** Fully Protected Animal  
**WL:** Watch List



## APPENDIX A. Representative Photos.



Photo 1. Relocation area with stand of coyote brush and young Douglas-fir.

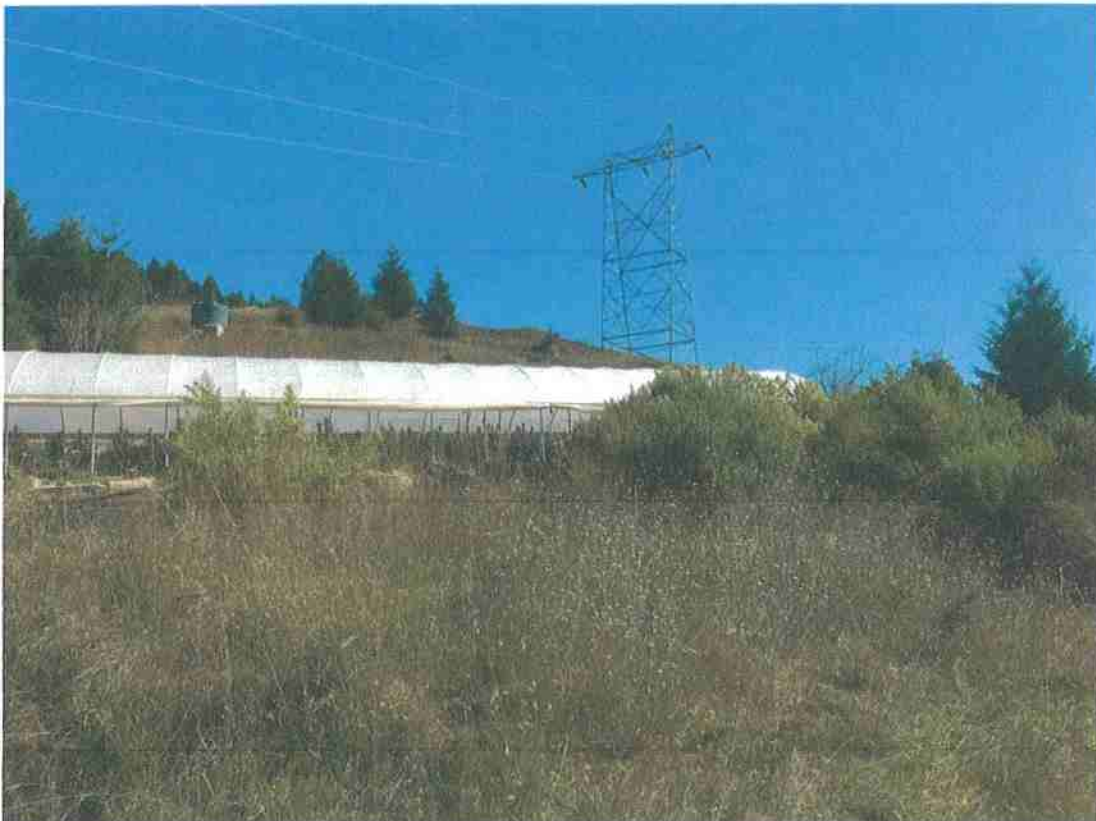


Photo 2. Existing cultivation area in PG & E powerline corridor with new area in the foreground.