



# COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

For the meeting of: 4/28/2026

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File #: 26-329

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**To:** Board of Supervisors

**From:** Public Works

**Agenda Section:** Departmental

**Vote Requirement:** Majority

**SUBJECT:**

Proposed Naming of the New Bridge (Bridge Number 04C0263) over the Mattole River at Honeydew in Memory of George Hindley and Vernon Edward Shinn

**RECOMMENDATION(S):**

That the Board of Supervisors:

1. Approve the proposed naming of the new bridge (Bridge Number 04C0263) over the Mattole River at Honeydew in memory of George Hindley and Vernon Edward Shinn.

**STRATEGIC PLAN:**

This action supports the following areas of your Board's Strategic Plan.

Area of Focus: Safe & Healthy Communities

Strategic Plan Category: 1007 - Improve the transportation network to be multi-model, safe, sustainable and equitable

**DISCUSSION:**

Construction of the replacement bridge over the Mattole River at Honeydew is substantially complete. Attachment 1 provides a site location map and photographs. The previous bridge, built in 1920, was a single-lane steel truss bridge with a unique "camelback" design. The new bridge, constructed with steel girders, provides two lanes with standard shoulders. The bridge replacement project included new abutments, a new center pier, and improved road approaches. The bridge provides a critically important regional road crossing over the Mattole River for the southwest portion of Humboldt County.

On Sept. 27, 2022, the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors approved and adopted the Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment for the project. On March 26, 2024, the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors awarded the construction contract to McCullough Construction, Inc. after receiving four bid proposals.

The process for evaluating proposed names or memorial dedications for roads, bridges, parks, or geographic features managed by the County of Humboldt is outlined in Resolution 95-92. On June 16, 2025, the Humboldt County Department of Public Works issued a notice inviting nominations for naming the new bridge at Honeydew with a deadline of Sept. 1, 2025 (Attachment 2). Two nominations were received, for George Hindley (Attachment 3) and Vernon Edward Shinn (Attachment 4). Information provided in the nomination packages is summarized below.

George Hindley (1846-1914) was a pioneer rancher in the Mattole valley and a Humboldt County Supervisor for over 17 years. In the nomination package, historian Laura Cooksey from the Mattole Valley Historical Society described him as a "rancher, orchardist, builder, helpful neighbor, and family man." George Hindley and his wife Margaret homesteaded in the valley by raising sheep and

growing apples. George Hindley was elected County Supervisor five times, serving from 1885 through 1888 and 1900 through 1914. George Hindley died in office at the age of 67. In researching George Hindley's life and tenure on the Board of Supervisors, historian Alex Service of the Fortuna Depot Museum noted his "career-long dedication to improving Humboldt County's transportation infrastructure," including being one of the driving forces leading to the construction of Fernbridge over the lower Eel River in 1911. Ms. Service concluded that "Given George Hindley's devoted work constructing and improving Humboldt County's bridges and roads, it seems to make perfect sense that a new bridge at Honeydew - the region in which the Hindley family ranch is located - would be named after Supervisor George Hindley."

Vernon Edward Shinn (1920-1967) was a rancher in the Mattole valley and lifetime resident of Honeydew. During World War II, Vernon Edward Shinn served in the U.S. Navy and was wounded in service. Vernon Edward Shinn was a member of the state and local woolgrowers and cattlemen's associations and was active in the Mattole Grange and the school board for the Upper Mattole School. Ownership of the Honeydew Store was conveyed to Vernon Edward Shinn and remains in the Shinn family. The Honeydew Store continues to be a longstanding community hub and venue for memorial services and public meetings.

On Oct. 22, 2025, the Public Works Department transmitted a letter to the Bear River Band of the Rohnerville Rancheria requesting feedback by Nov. 24, 2025, whether the tribe had any concerns or objections with either of the two received nominations. No concerns or objections regarding the nominations were received.

Based on our evaluation, the Public Works Department believes that both nominations are consistent with the criteria in Resolution 95-92. As such, the Public Works Department recommends that the Board approve two memorial signs, one on each side of the bridge, honoring the two nominees, as depicted in Attachment 5.

**SOURCE OF FUNDING:**

Road Fund (1200), Federal Highway Administration Highway Bridge Program

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

Narrative Explanation of Financial Impact:

If approved, the cost to fabricate and install the two signs would be approximately \$600. This cost would be covered by the bridge replacement project which is being funded by Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Highway Bridge Program Funds (88.53%) and the Humboldt County Road Fund (11.47%). Funds are available in the approved Fiscal Year 2025-26 budget.

**STAFFING IMPACT:**

Not applicable

**OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:**

None

**ALTERNATIVES TO STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The Board of Supervisors could decide to choose only one of the two nominees for designation on the new bridge. This alternative is not recommended because Public Works believes both nominations are worthy of recognition on the bridge.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

- 1 - Site location map and photographs
- 2 - Honeydew bridge naming notice (June 2025)
- 3 - Hindley memorial nomination package (August 2025)
- 4 - Shinn memorial nomination package (August 2025)
- 5 - Proposed memorial signs and locations

**PREVIOUS ACTION/REFERRAL:**

Meeting of: 3/26/2024  
File No.: 24-277