



PUBLIC DRAFT
**INITIAL STUDY AND
MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION**
SCH: 2025101326

FOR
**STEPHEN & JUDITH ABBOTT
STANDARD CDP
AT 34501 SUNSET WAY; APN: 017-060-13**
File No. CDP_2025-0005

LEAD AGENCY:
County of Mendocino
Department of Planning & Building Services
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September 24, 2025

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INTRODUCTION

In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (California Public Resources Code §21000 et seq.) and the State CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, §15000 et seq.), this Draft Initial Study (IS) has been prepared as documentation for a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) for the proposed single-family residence, garage, fence, septic system, culvert at driveway approach, and temporary travel trailer for construction support at 34501 Sunset Way, Fort Bragg; APN: 017-060-13 (Project). This Draft IS/MND includes a description of the Project; the location of the Project site; an evaluation of the potential environmental impacts of Project implementation; and written statement that an Environment Impact Report (EIR) is not required because the project will not have a significant adverse impact on the environment.

Pursuant to Section 15367 of the State CEQA Guidelines, the County of Mendocino is the Lead Agency for the Project. As the Lead Agency, The County of Mendocino has the principal responsibility for carrying out the project and has the authority to approve the Project and its accompanying environmental documentation. In addition to addressing the potential environmental impacts that would result from the Project, this Draft IS/MND serves as the primary environmental document for future activities associated with the Project, including discretionary approvals requested or required for Project implementation.

Questions in the Initial Study Checklist are provided with their respective answers based on analysis undertaken. An explanation for all checklist responses is included, and all answers take account of the whole action involved, including off site as well as on-site; cumulative as well as project level; indirect as well as direct; and construction as well as operational impacts. The explanation of each issue identifies (a) the significance criteria or threshold, if any, used to evaluate each question; and (b) the mitigation measure identified, if any, to reduce the impact to less than significance. In the checklist the following definitions are used:

"Potentially Significant Impact" means there is substantial evidence that an effect may be significant.

"Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated" means the incorporation of one or more mitigation measures can reduce the effect from potentially significant to a less than significant level.

"Less Than Significant Impact" means that the effect is less than significant, and no mitigation is necessary to reduce the impact to a lesser level.

"No Impact" means that the effect does not apply to the Project, or clearly will not impact nor be impacted by the Project.

PROJECT INFORMATION

FILE NUMBER: CDP_2025-0005

OWNER/APPLICANT: Stephen & Judith Abbott
3067 Willow Bend Drive
Chico, CA 95973

AGENT: Donna Rose Design
630 Salem Street #110
Chico, CA 95928

PROJECT LOCATION: In the Coastal Zone, 3± miles south of Fort Bragg city center, 1,790± feet west of the intersection of Sunset Way and Ocean Drive located at 34501 Sunset Way, Fort Bragg (APN: 017-060-13).

TOTAL ACREAGE: 2± Acres

GENERAL PLAN: Rural Residential 5-Acre Minimum, variable to 2-Acre minimum (RR-5 [RR-2])

ZONING: Rural Residential 5-Acre Minimum, variable to 2-Acre minimum (RR-5 [RR-2])

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15125, the Project Description is required to identify the existing baseline physical conditions. For this project, the baseline conditions include all existing development and the current parcel configuration. The applicant requests a Standard Coastal Development Permit to construct a driveway, a 2,504 square foot single-family residence with a 1,009 square foot garage, a 6 foot wooden fence at southern property line, install a septic system, a culvert for drainage at driveway approach, and install a temporary travel trailer for construction support.

The subject parcel is located in the Coastal Zone, 3± south of the Fort Bragg city center, 1,790± feet west of the Sunset Way and Ocean Drive intersection, located at 34501 Sunset Way, Fort Bragg (APN: 017-060-13). The property is located on a relatively flat coastal terrace with an elevation of approximately 55 feet above mean sea level (amsl). With the exception of two wells, the property is undeveloped. According to the recorded subdivision map that created the parcel (MS 62-86), a 60 foot wide private roadway and public utility easement is sited along the northern property boundary.¹ A PG&E electric utility box is located within the 60 foot wide easement. Sunset Way provides access to the site and is a privately maintained road.

The subject parcel is mapped within a Marginal Water Resources area.² The Important Farmlands map indicates the subject parcel is sited on Rural Residential and Rural Commercial lands. The property is subject to the Mendocino County Ordinance No. 4313 Stormwater Runoff Pollution Prevention Program.³ The parcel is mapped within a High Fire Hazard area and is served by the Fort Bragg Rural Fire Protection District for fire services. The parcel is mapped within a Highly Scenic area.⁴

The surrounding Land Uses and Zoning are detailed in the following table.

TABLE 1: ADJACENT LAND USE AND ZONING

	GENERAL PLAN	ZONING	LOT SIZES	USES
NORTH	Rural Residential (RR5(2))	Rural Residential (RR5(2))	2± Acres	Undeveloped
EAST	Rural Residential (RR5(2))	Rural Residential (RR5(2))	2± Acres	Residential
SOUTH	Rural Residential (RR5(1))	Rural Residential (RR5(1))	1± Acres	Residential
WEST	Rural Residential (RR5(1))	Rural Residential (RR5(1))	1± to 2.5± Acres	Residential

Other Public Agencies Whose Approval is Required (e.g., permits, financial approval, or participation agreements): N/A

Have California Native American tribes traditionally and culturally affiliated with the project area requested consultation pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21080.3.1? If so, is there a plan for consultation that includes, for example, the determination of significance of impacts to tribal cultural resources, procedures regarding confidentiality, etc.?

¹ MS No. 62-86 Sheet 2 of 2 Parcel Map. Map case 2, Drawer 48, Page 44.

² Coastal Groundwater Resources Map.

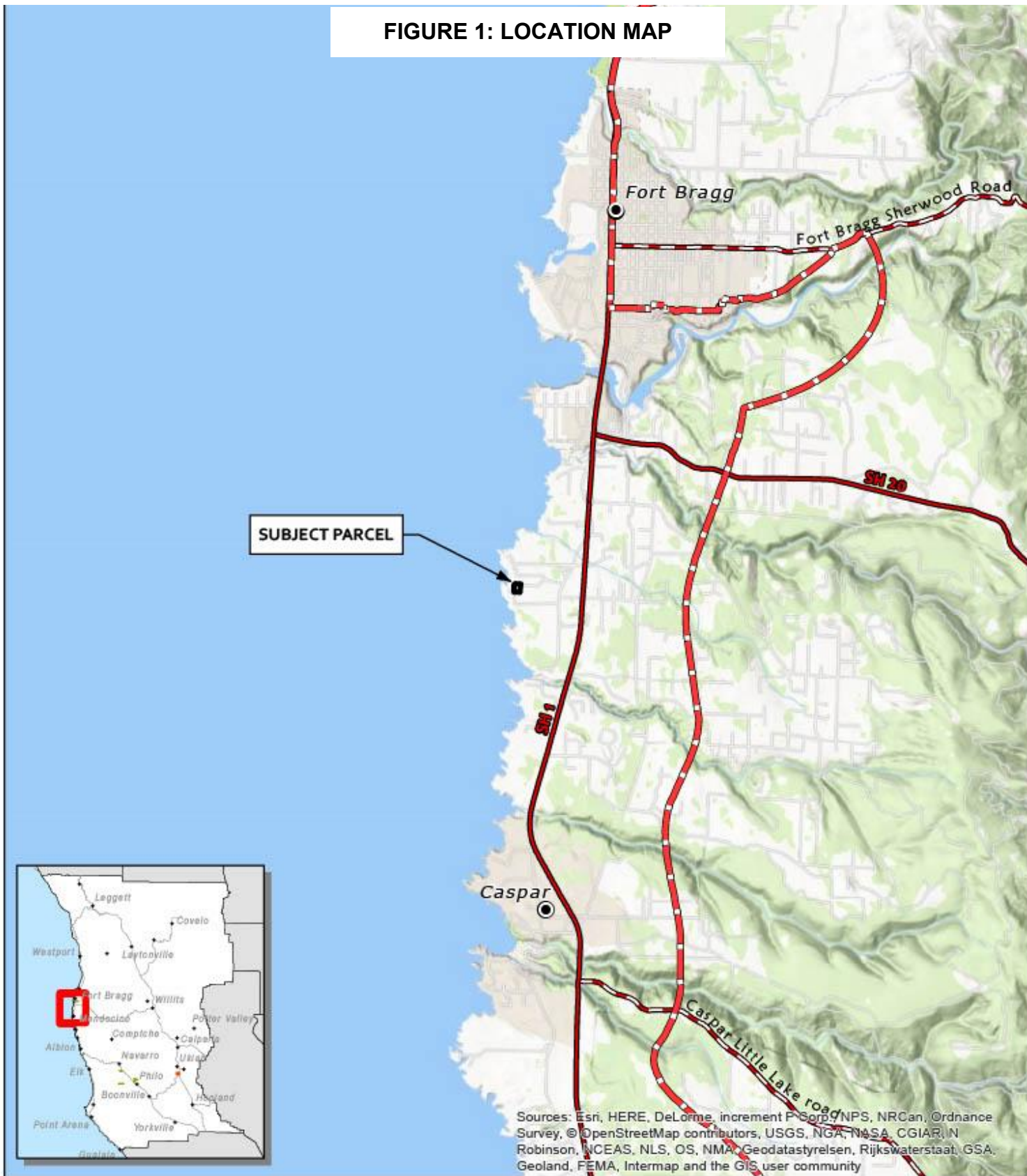
³ Municipal Stormwater (MS) 4 Map.

⁴ Highly Scenic Map

Pursuant to the consultation requirements of Assembly Bill (AB) 52, in July 2022, the County of Mendocino (County) provided formal notification to the California Native American tribes that requested notification of all new potential Negative Declarations within the County. The following tribes were notified Cloverdale Rancheria, Cahto Tribe, Potter Valley Tribe, Redwood Valley Rancheria, Sherwood Valley Band of Pomo Indians, and Round Valley Tribe.

PROJECT PLOT PLAN: See Page 6 of this document.

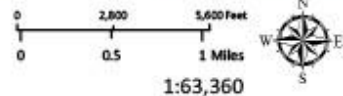
FIGURE 1: LOCATION MAP



Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, increment P Corp., NPS, NRCAn, Ordnance Survey, © OpenStreetMap contributors, USGS, NGA, NASA, CGIAR, N Robinson, NCEAS, NLS, OS, NMA, Geodastystyrelsen, Rijkswaterstaat, GSA, Geoland, FEMA, Intermap and the GIS user community

CASE: CDP 2025-0005
OWNER: ABBOTT, Stephen & Judith
APN: 017-060-13
APLCT: Stephen & Judith Abbott
AGENT: Donna Rose Design
ADDRESS: 34501 Sunset Way, Fort Bragg

-  Major Towns & Places
-  Coastal Zone Boundary
-  Highways
-  Major Roads



LOCATION

THIS MAP AND DATA ARE PROVIDED WITHOUT WARRANTY OF ANY KIND.

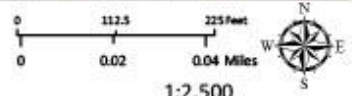
FIGURE 2: AERIAL IMAGERY



Source: Esri, Maxar, Earthstar Geographics, and the GIS User Community

CASE: CDP 2025-0005
OWNER: ABBOTT, Stephen & Judith
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APLCT: Stephen & Judith Abbott
AGENT: Donna Rose Design
ADDRESS: 34501 Sunset Way, Fort Bragg

-  Public Roads
-  Private Roads
-  Assessors Parcels

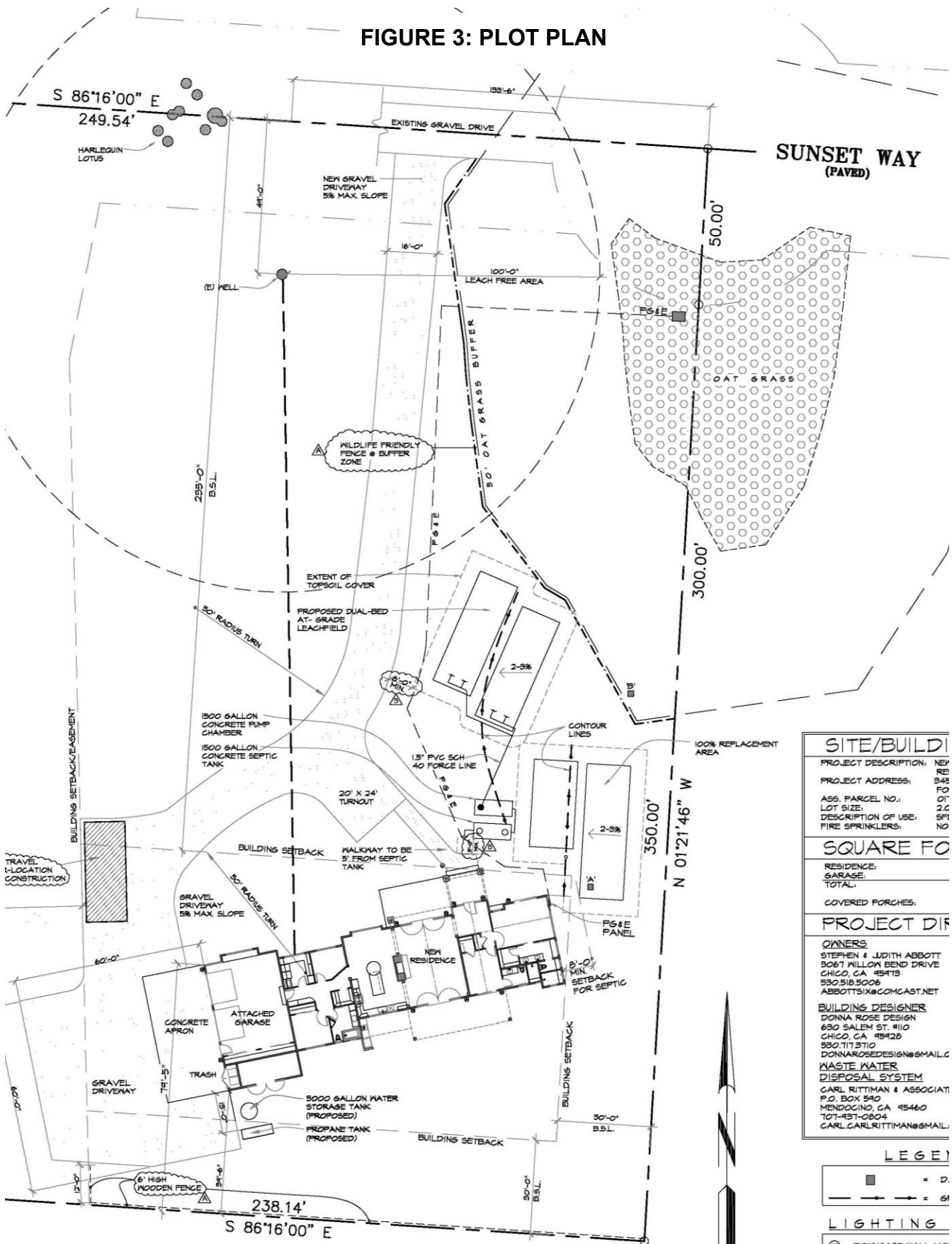


1:2,500

AERIAL IMAGERY

THIS MAP AND DATA ARE PROVIDED WITHOUT WARRANTY OF ANY KIND.

FIGURE 3: PLOT PLAN



SITE/BUILD	
PROJECT DESCRIPTION:	NEW RES
PROJECT ADDRESS:	548 FO
ASS. PARCEL NO.:	01
LOT SIZE:	2.2
DESCRIPTION OF USE:	SFR
FIRE SPRINKLERS:	NO
SQUARE FO	
RESIDENCE:	
GARAGE:	
TOTAL:	
COVERED PORCHES:	
PROJECT DIR	
OWNERS	
STEPHEN & JUDITH ABBOTT 5067 WILLOW BEND DRIVE CHICO, CA 95915 530.510.5006 ABBOTTSEX@COMCAST.NET	
BUILDING DESIGNER	
DONNA ROSE DESIGN 630 SALEM ST. #110 CHICO, CA 95928 530.717.3710 DONNAROSEDESIGN@GMAIL.COM	
WASTE WATER DISPOSAL SYSTEM	
CARL RITTMAN & ASSOCIATI P.O. BOX 590 MENDOCINO, CA 95460 707.431-0804 CARL.CARLRITTMAN@GMAIL.COM	

LEGEND	
	= D
	= G
LIGHTING	
	DOWNCAST WALL-MQ
	DOWNCAST LANDSC
* REFER TO ATTACH	

SITE PLAN

1"=20'

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED

This project would potentially affect the environmental factors checked below, involving at least one impact that is "Potentially Significant" as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetics | <input type="checkbox"/> Ag and Forestry Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Air Quality |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Energy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Geology/Soils | <input type="checkbox"/> Greenhouse Gas Emissions | <input type="checkbox"/> Hazards/Hazardous Materials |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hydrology / Water Quality | <input type="checkbox"/> Land Use / Planning | <input type="checkbox"/> Mineral Resources |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Noise | <input type="checkbox"/> Population / Housing | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | <input type="checkbox"/> Tribal Cultural Resources |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities / Service Systems | <input type="checkbox"/> Wildfire | <input type="checkbox"/> Mandatory Findings
of Significance |

DETERMINATION

Based on this initial evaluation:

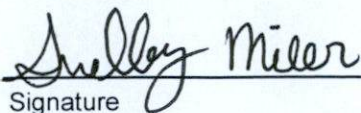
I find that the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.

I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.

I find that the proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.

I find that the proposed project MAY have a "potentially significant impact" or "potentially significant unless mitigated" impact on the environment, but at least one effect 1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.

I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.


Signature

Shelby Miller

Printed Name

10/21/2025

Date

Planner II

Title

ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

5.1 AESTHETICS

WOULD THE PROJECT:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage point). If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare, which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

DISCUSSION: A scenic vista is defined as a location that offers a high quality, harmonious, and visually interesting view. One roadway in Mendocino County, State Route (SR) 128, was officially added to the eligibility list of State Scenic Highways by California State Assembly Bill 998 on July 12, 2019. According to California Department of Transportation, SR 1 and SR 20 are “eligible” for designation as scenic highways but have not been officially designated as such.

State Route 1 is part of the California Freeway and Expressway System, and through the Los Angeles metro area, Monterey, Santa Cruz, San Francisco metro area, and Leggett, is part of the National Highway System, a network of highways that are considered essential to the country’s economy, defense, and mobility by the Federal Highway Administration. State Route 1 is eligible to be included in the State Scenic Highway System; however, only a few stretches between Los Angeles and San Francisco have officially been designated as a “scenic highway”, meaning that there are substantial sections of highway passing through a “memorable landscape” with no “visual intrusions.”

Additionally, the County has two roadway segments designated as “heritage corridors” by California Public Resources Code Section 5077.5. The North Coast Heritage Corridor includes the entire segment of SR 1 in the county, as well as the segment of U.S. Highway 101 from the junction with SR 1 in Leggett, north to the Humboldt County line. The Tahoe-Pacific Heritage Corridor extends from Lake Tahoe to the Mendocino County coast. It includes the entire segment of SR 20 within the county and the segment of US 101 from the SR 20 junction north of Calpella to the SR 20 highway exit south of Willits. Mendocino County’s General Plan Resource Management Goal RM-14’s (Visual Character) objective is: *Protection of the visual quality of the county’s natural and rural landscapes, scenic resources, and areas of significant natural beauty.*

The main source of daytime glare in the unincorporated portions of the Mendocino County is from sunlight reflecting off of structures with reflective surfaces, such as windows. A nighttime sky in which stars are readily visible is often considered a valuable scenic/visual resource. In urban areas, views of the nighttime sky are being diminished by “light pollution.” Two elements of light pollution may affect county residents: sky glow (a result of light fixtures that emit a portion of their light directly upward in the sky), and light trespass (poorly shielded or poorly aimed fixtures which cast light into unwanted areas, such as neighboring properties and homes). Different lighting standards are set by classifying areas by lighting zones (LZ). The 2000 Census classified the majority of Mendocino County as LZ2 (rural), which requires stricter lighting standards in order to protect these areas from new sources of light pollution and light trespass. Mendocino County’s General Plan Resource Management Goal RM-15’s (Dark Sky) objective is, “*Protection of the qualities of the county’s nighttime sky and reduced energy use.*”

- a-b) **No Impact:** The project site is located west of State Route 1 and is mapped within a Highly Scenic Area. SR1 is not considered a scenic vista and would have no impact on such. The project is located on a relatively flat coastal terrace and would not alter natural landforms, topography, vegetation, historic structures, scenic landscapes or similar resources within a highway officially designated as a state scenic highway.
- c-d) **Less Than a Significant Impact:** As stated previously, the parcel is mapped within a highly scenic area and is located west of SR1. Adjacent properties to the south, west, and east of the subject parcel are developed with single-family residences (SFRs). The property is not visible from the nearest publicly maintained street on Ocean Drive nor is it visible from coastal waters, navigable waters, vista points, beaches, or parks. The proposed SFR would be one story and approximately 25 feet 9 inches tall. Project materials include a statement and adjacent neighbor analysis prepared by the landowners indicating that the proposed residence would not obstruct views from other structures within the Sunset Way neighborhood or on public roads or places. Additionally, the project proposes exterior lighting to include double tiered path lights on all walkways to the house and single downcast and shielded lights attached to the entry and exits of the single-family residence and garage. As proposed, the project would have a less than significant impact on visual resources.

MITIGATION MEASURES: None.

FINDINGS: The proposed project would have **Less Than a Significant Impact** on Aesthetics.

5.2 AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY RESOURCES

WOULD THE PROJECT:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP) of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g), timberland (as defined by PRC section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g))?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forestland to non-forest use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

DISCUSSION: The State of California Department of Conservation manages the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP) which produces maps and statistical data used for analyzing impacts on California's agricultural resources. The FMMP mapping survey covers roughly 98% of privately owned land in the state and updates each map approximately every two years to provide an archive of land use change over time. Agricultural land is rated according to soil quality and irrigation status; the best quality land is called "Prime Farmland," with other critical designations including "Unique Farmland," or "Farmland of Statewide Importance."

The Williamson Act (officially the California Land Conservation Act of 1965) provides preferential tax assessments to owners of farmland and open-space land in exchange for a ten year agreement that the land will not be developed or otherwise converted to another use. Since the early 1980's participation in the program has hovered around 16 million acres enrolled under contract, constituting about one third of all privately held land in the state and about one half of the state's agricultural land. The intent of the Williamson Act is to preserve a maximum amount of a limited supply of prime agricultural land to discourage premature and unnecessary conversion of prime agricultural land to urban uses.

The Timberland Production Zone (TPZ) was established in 1976 in the California Government Code as a designation for lands for which the Assessor's records as of 1976 demonstrated that the "highest and best use" would be timber production and its accessory uses. Public improvements and urban services are prohibited on TPZ lands except where necessary and compatible with ongoing timber production. The original purpose of TPZ Zoning District was to preserve and protect timberland from conversion to other more profitable uses and ensure that timber producing areas not be subject to use conflicts with neighboring lands.

a-e) **No Impact:** The project site is located within the Rural Residential zoning district and land use classification. The Rural Residential classification is intended "to encourage local small scale food production (farming) in areas which are not well suited for large scale commercial agriculture, defined by present or potential use, location, mini-climate, slope, exposure, etc. The Rural Residential classification is not intended to be a growth area, and residences should be located as to create minimal impact on agricultural viability".⁵ Principally permitted uses within the RR land use classification and zoning district include single-family residences and associated structures.

The project site is situated on Rural Residential & Rural Commercial, as indicated on the California Department of Conservation Important Farmland Categories. Rural Residential land is associated with low density rural developments. The property is not under a Williamson Act contract. The project to construct a single-family residence and associated structures would have no impact on timber production, agricultural resources, or forests. The project does not include rezoning or converting forest land to non-forest land. Single-family residences and associated structures are considered low-density development and therefore would have no impact on agricultural and forest resources.

MITIGATION MEASURES: None.

FINDINGS: The proposed project would have **NO IMPACT** on Agricultural and Forestry Resources.

5.3 AIR QUALITY

WOULD THE PROJECT:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

⁵ County of Mendocino. General Plan – Coastal Element.

DISCUSSION: Mendocino County is located within the North Coast Air Basin, consisting of Del Norte, Humboldt, Trinity, Mendocino, and northern Sonoma counties. Additionally, the Mendocino County Air Quality Management District (MCAQMD) is responsible for enforcing state and federal clean air acts, as well as local air quality protection regulations. Any new emission point source is subject to an air quality permit, consistent with the District's air quality plan, prior to project construction. The MCAQMD also enforces standards requiring new construction, including houses, to use energy efficient, low-emission EPA certified wood stoves and similar combustion devices to help reduce area source emissions.

MCAQMD operates air monitoring stations in Fort Bragg, Ukiah, and Willits. Based on the results of monitoring, the entire County has been determined to be in attainment for all Federal criteria air pollutants and in attainment for all State standards except Particulate Matter less than 10 microns in size (PM₁₀). In January of 2005, MCAQMD adopted a Particulate Matter Attainment Plan establishing a policy framework for the reduction of PM₁₀ emissions, and has adopted Rule 1-430 which requires specific dust control measures during all construction operations, the grading of roads, or the clearing of land as follows:

- 1) All visibly dry, disturbed soil road surfaces shall be watered to minimize fugitive dust emissions;
- 2) All unpaved surfaces, unless otherwise treated with suitable chemicals or oils, shall have a posted speed limit of 10 miles per hour;
- 3) Earth or other material that has been transported by trucking or earth moving equipment, erosion by water, or other means onto paved streets shall be promptly removed;
- 4) Asphalt, oil, water, or suitable chemicals shall be applied on materials stockpiles and other surfaces that can give rise to airborne dusts;
- 5) All earthmoving activities shall cease when sustained winds exceed 15 miles per hour;
- 6) The operator shall take reasonable precautions to prevent the entry of unauthorized vehicles onto the site during non-work hours; and
- 7) The operator shall keep a daily log of activities to control fugitive dust. In December 2006, MCAQMD adopted Regulation 4, Particulate Emissions Reduction Measures, which establishes emissions standards and use of wood burning appliances to reduce particulate emissions. These regulations applied to wood heating appliances, installed both indoors and outdoors for residential and commercial structures, including public facilities. Where applicable, MCAQMD also recommends mitigation measures to encourage alternatives to woodstoves/fireplaces, to control dust on construction sites and unpaved access roads (generally excepting roads used for agricultural purposes), and to promote trip reduction measures where feasible. In 2007, the Air Resources Board (ARB) adopted a regulation to reduce diesel particulate matter (PM) and oxides of nitrogen (NO_x) emissions from in-use (existing) off-road heavy-duty diesel vehicles in California. Such vehicles are used in construction, mining, and industrial operations. The regulation imposes limits on idling, requires a written idling policy, and requires disclosure when selling vehicles. Off-road diesel-powered equipment used for grading or road development must be registered in the Air Resources Board DOORS program and be labeled accordingly. The regulation restricts the adding of older vehicles into fleets and requires fleets to reduce their emissions by retiring, replacing, or repowering older engines or installing Verified Diesel Emission Control Strategies. In 1998, the California Air Resources Board established diesel exhaust as an Air Toxic, leading to regulations for categories of diesel engines. Diesel engines emit a complex mixture of air pollutants, including both gaseous and solid material which contributes to PM_{2.5}. All stationary and portable diesel engines over 50 horsepower need a permit through the MCAQMD.

Receptors include sensitive receptors and worker receptors. Sensitive receptors refer to those segments of the population most susceptible to poor air quality (i.e., children, the elderly, and those with pre-existing serious health problems affected by air quality). Land uses where sensitive individuals are most likely to spend time include schools and schoolyards, parks and playgrounds, daycare centers, nursing homes, hospitals, and residential communities (these sensitive land uses may also be referred to as sensitive receptors). Worker receptors refer to employees and locations where people work.

- a) **No Impact:** The project site is located within the North Coast Air Basin (Basin) which is governed by the MCAQMD. The MCAQMD enforces standards requiring new construction, including houses, to use energy efficient, low-emission EPA certified wood stoves and similar combustion devices to help reduce area source emissions. The proposed project to construct a single-family residence, a garage, and associated structures would not conflict with the District's air quality plan.
- b-d) **Less Than a Significant Impact:** The MCAQMD operates air monitoring stations in Fort Bragg, Ukiah, and Willits. Based on the results of monitoring, the entire County has been determined to be in attainment for all Federal criteria air pollutants and in attainment for all State standards except Particulate Matter less than 10 microns in size (PM₁₀). In January of 2005, MCAQMD adopted a Particulate Matter Attainment Plan establishing a policy framework for the reduction of PM₁₀ emissions and has adopted Rule 1-430 which requires specific dust control measures during all construction operations, the grading of roads, or the clearing of land. The applicant will be required to adhere to all MCAQMD recommendations.

The project site is currently undeveloped with the exception of two wells and is located approximately 150 feet west of an existing single-family residence. Although the general area is rural in nature, the subject property is adjacent to several residences. The proposed development has the potential to expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations. Construction equipment and vehicles would access and move within the Project site throughout the short construction duration. The project would not include any sources likely to create objectionable odors. Construction would involve the temporary use of construction equipment and materials, such as fuels, that may generate intermittent, minor odors. Odors that occur in equipment exhaust would be minimized and would cease at the end of construction. Though the minimal paving is not expected to result in significant odors, MCAQMD then has the authority to require the source to implement mitigation measures to correct the nuisance conditions. This regulatory structure ensures that unanticipated odor sources that may arise from the project are handled appropriately. This would ensure that the impact would be less than significant.

MITIGATION MEASURES: None.

FINDINGS: The proposed project would have **LESS THAN A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT** on Air Quality.

5.4 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

WOULD THE PROJECT:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, and regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

WOULD THE PROJECT:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

DISCUSSION: The U.S Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) is responsible for protecting endangered and threatened species, and conserving candidate and at-risk species. The USFWS Information for Planning and Consultation tool (IPaC) provides site-specific information on federally listed species. In addition, the USFWS National Wetlands Inventory houses information on the status, extent, characteristics, and function of wetlands. Section 404 of the federal Clean Water Act establishes a program to regulate the discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States. Section 404 requires a permit before dredged or fill material may be discharged unless the activity is exempt. Section 404 defines wetlands as “those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstance do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bog, and similar areas.”

The California Endangered Species Act (CESA) is a California environmental law that conserves and protects plant and animal species at risk of extinction.⁶ Plant and animal species may be designated, threatened or endangered under CESA after a formal listing process by the California Fish and Game Commission. Per CEQA Guidelines Section 15380(c), a species of animal or plant shall be presumed to be endangered, rare, or threatened as it is listed in: (1) Sections 670.2 or 670.5, Title 14, California Code of Regulations; or (2) Title 50, Code of Federal Endangered Species Act as rare, threatened, or endangered.

The California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB) provides location and natural history information on special status plants, animals, and natural communities to the public, agencies, and conservation organizations. The data helps drive conservation decisions, aid in the environmental review of projects and land use changes and provide baseline data helpful in recovering endangered species and for research projects. Natural Communities are evaluated using NatureServe’s Heritage Methodology, the same system used to assign global and state rarity ranks for plant and animal species in the CNDDDB. VegCAMP has been ranking California Natural Communities by their rarity and threat since the inception of the program. Natural Communities with ranks of S1-S3 are considered Sensitive Natural Communities to be addressed in the environmental review processes of CEQA and its equivalents. CNDDDB has 32 species listed for Mendocino County that range in listing status from Candidate Threatened to Endangered. Additionally, the only comprehensive VegCAMP mapping completed in Mendocino County is that of Mendocino Cypress and Related Vegetation (Pygmy forest), Point Arena Stornetta Unit, and Garcia River.

The Porter-Cologne Act governs water quality through nine Regional Water Boards and the State Water Board. Mendocino County is within the jurisdiction of the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (the ‘Board’). The Board regulates discharges under the Act through the issuance of National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits. The Porter-Cologne Act also requires adoption of regional water quality control plans. The North Coast Basin Plan was most recently adopted in 2018 and establishes water quality objectives, implementation measures, and monitoring programs for the region. Fish, wildlife, and native plant resources are protected and managed by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW).

⁶ Note: Originally enacted in 1970, CESA was repealed and replaced by an updated version in 1984 and amended in 1997.

Mendocino County has a wide range of climates, topography, soils, and watershed conditions, all of which produce very diverse plant and animal communities. Vegetation predominant in the region includes valley grassland and oak woodland in lowlands and valleys, coastal scrub and prairies along the Pacific Ocean, and mixed chaparral, hardwood forest, and coniferous forest in the mountains. The Mendocino County General Plan identifies four (4) “sensitive habitats”, including Serpentine Soils and Rock Outcrops, Pygmy Forest, Wetlands and Waters of the United States, and Old-Growth Forest. Additionally, Coho salmon, Chinook salmon, and steelhead trout habitats are found in large portions of the County. The status of these and other species is of concern to federal, state, and local resource agencies.

Mendocino County currently has two active Habitat Conservation Plans (HCPs) with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the first of which provides protections for the Point Arena Mountain Beaver. The Fisher Family HCP (Permit #TE170629-0) covers 24 acres of coastal scrub and was adopted December 3, 2007, for a period of 50 years. The Fisher Family HCP applies to Assessor Parcel Number 027-211-02 located at 43400 Hathaway Crossing, Point Arena. The second HCP is Pacific Gas & Electric Company’s Multiple Region Operations and Maintenance HCP. The HCP was issued in 2020 for a period of 30 years. The HCP includes protections for several species across multiple jurisdictions. Since 2003, the Mendocino Redwood Company (MRC) has managed the County’s only Natural Community Conservation Plan which covers all lands owned by the MRC to preserve regionally important habitat.

Mendocino County Code (MCC) Chapter 20.496 establishes regulations for Environmentally Sensitive Habitat and Other Resource Areas (ESHA). Per MCC Section 20.493.010, ESHAs include “anadromous fish streams, sand dunes, rookeries and marine mammal haul-out areas, wetlands, riparian areas, areas of pygmy vegetation which contain species of rare or endangered plants and habitats of rare and endangered plants and animals.” MCC Section 20.496.020 requires that a buffer be established adjacent to all identified ESHA. The purpose of the buffer is to provide for a sufficient area to protect the ESHA from degradation resulting from future developments and shall be compatible with the continuance of such habitat areas. MCC Chapter 20.496 limits the type of development or activities within wetlands, estuary areas, open coastal waters, lakes, streams, rivers, riparian corridors, riparian resource areas, dunes, and Pygmy forests. If development is permitted in such areas, MCC Chapter 20.496 establishes specific limitations and requires findings to support approval.

The project description includes a Standard Coastal Development Permit to construct a driveway, a 2,504 square foot single-family residence with a 1,009 square foot garage, a 6-foot wooden fence, a propane tank, a water tank, install a septic system, a culvert for drainage at driveway approach, and install a temporary travel trailer for construction support. The proposed fence would be constructed along the southern property line. In addition, the project proposes to gravel the driveway for now and pave the driveway at a later date.

- a-b) **Less Than a Significant Impact with Mitigation:** A Biological Scoping and Botanical Survey Report was prepared by Wynn Coastal Planning & Biology (WCPB) on February 3, 2025, to locate potential environmentally sensitive habitat areas (ESHAs) and other habitats to determine if they would be directly or indirectly impacted by the proposed development. ESHAs are also considered sensitive natural communities. California oatgrass prairie (*Danthonia californica* grassland association) was identified on the northeast property boundary and is considered a sensitive natural community and ESHA (See Figure 3). The extent of the California oatgrass prairie lies on a portion of the northeast property boundary and the adjacent to the parcel east. WCPB stated that the majority of the property is vegetated with non-native grasses that are best classified as common velvet grass – sweet vernal grass meadow (*Holcus lanatus* – *Anthoxanthum odoratum* grassland alliance).

Several patches of Harlequin lotus (*Hosackia gracilis*) plants were identified on the northern property boundary. Harlequin lotus is the presumed larval host plant of the Lotis blue butterfly. WCPB stated that this plant species is not rare enough to be considered an ESHA but its presence prompted consultation with the US Fish and Wildlife Service for technical assistance regarding the potential presence for Lotis blue butterfly. USFWS agreed with WCPB that this population of harlequin lotus is not significant enough to warrant protocol level Lotis blue butterfly surveys.

A PG&E utility box is situated within the Coastal oatgrass prairie (ESHA) and was installed to provide service to the subdivision (CDS 1-99/ CDB 45-99). Approximately 16 lineal feet of utility line would be trenched for the connection between the proposed single-family residence and the existing PG&E box. With the exception of the utility line trench, all other proposed development would be located greater than 50 feet from the identified California oatgrass prairie ESHA. A Reduced Buffer Analysis and Report of Compliance were conducted by WCPB to assist in the determination of suitable protection for potential sensitive species and presumed sensitive habitat in the study area. WCPB stated, “the disturbance and area of impact should be minimal and should be compatible with the continuance of the California oatgrass prairie”, as it is located in an area “dominated by non-native invasive grasses and does not support any rare species”. Reseeding the disturbed area with California oatgrass would result in no permanent impacts.

Per LCP Policy 3.1-7, a buffer area shall be established adjacent to all ESHAs and shall be minimum of 100 feet, unless an applicant can demonstrate, after consultation with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and County Planning staff, that 100 feet is not necessary to protect the ESHA resources. “The buffer area shall be measured from the outside edge of the ESHAs and shall not be less than fifty (50) feet in width.” WCPB stated that in their professional opinion a buffer width of 100 feet is not necessary to protect the ESHA and recommends a 50-foot buffer. WCPB determined that the non-native grassland surrounding the ESHA is not functionally related to this habitat area and does not need to be included as a part of the ESHA. No special status plants or animals were observed or associated with the ESHA within the study area. Nesting birds could use this habitat and nesting bird surveys have been incorporated in the recommended avoidance measures.

The subject parcel is sited on a relatively flat coastal terrace with no natural topographic features present to use for buffering purposes or cultural features (roads or dikes) to use as a buffer. Adjacent parcels contain single-family residences similar in size to the project. WCPB states the recommended 50 ft. buffer is consistent with adjacent properties. The proposed project is residential in nature and consistent with existing development in the area. Other project proposals were considered including constructing the driveway within or adjacent to the ESHA but were redesigned to avoid the identified ESHA. As previously stated, the only development within the California oatgrass prairie would be 16± feet of trenching to connect the existing PG&E box to the proposed single-family residence. Approximately 50 feet of trenching would be located within the 50-foot buffer. All other developments would be sited 50 feet or greater from the outside edge of the ESHA. Additionally, WCPB stated, “if the bare soil resulting from the utility line trench is reseeded with California oatgrass seed, there should be net gain in California oatgrass in the small footprint of the utility line installation.”

Alternative locations of the trenching were evaluated including trenching north or south of the PG&E box, however, trenching in either direction would result in greater impacts to the ESHA. Trenching west of the PG&E box would be the least amount disturbance in lineal feet. Alternative methods to trenching were also evaluated such as horizontal drilling, which would require minimal ground disturbance by drilling a small, angled hole down into the ground and drilling sideways to create a tunnel along the planned path.⁷ Another alternative would be Impact Molding which is driving a metal tube through the ground with a hammer to create a tunnel under the surface and then pulling the electricity cable through the tunnel.⁸ Impact Molding’s main disadvantage is it’s limited precision and control over the path, making it unsuitable for complex installation.

Horizontal drilling and Impact Molding would both require impacts to the ESHA by drilling holes into the ground adjacent to the PG&E box. Although these alternative methods may appear to be less impactful, working underground inherently carries greater uncertainty regarding project execution. Challenges include encountering roots, rocks, and existing underground utilities, operational errors, limited reach, and potential ground damage. Horizontal drilling is not

⁷ Kendon, Phil. 2021. “HDD in Tough Conditions: Drilling between a Rock and a Hard Place.” Trenchlesspedia. March 2, 2021. <https://trenchlesspedia.com/hdd-in-tough-conditions-drilling-between-a-rock-and-a-hard-place/2/4707>.

⁸ Kendon, Phil. 2021. “How Impact Molding Works.” Trenchlesspedia. March 18, 2021. <https://trenchlesspedia.com/how-impact-molding-works/2/4728>.

suitable for all soil types. Directing the utility line trench westward from the existing PG&E box would be the most feasible and less environmentally damaging way to connect to the single-family residence if mitigation measures are followed. The trenching method allows for greater precision and minimizes the potential for error.

The “best site” is as proposed. WCPB stated, “the proposed development would be compatible with the California oatgrass prairie, its functional capacity and its ability to be self-sustaining and maintain natural species diversity”. The project proposes minimal impervious surfaces and vegetation removal and is not expected to result in significant areas of bare soil, noise, dust, artificial light, nutrient runoff, air pollution, or human intrusion into sensitive areas. The proposed trenching would not change the hydraulic capacity, subsurface flow pattern, biological diversity or hydrological processes. No topography or stream patterns would be altered. Per Section 30250(a) of the California Coastal Act, new residential development shall be located within, contiguous with or in close proximity to existing developed areas. Considering the PG&E box was constructed on and for the subject parcel, the subject parcel shall be permitted to connect to the existing PG&E box with 2:1 mitigation to re-establish California oatgrass prairie in the disturbed area post-trenching and construction.

WCPB stated the original route for the driveway and utility line have been modified to avoid the ESHA to the greatest extent feasible. The project was designed to avoid all special status resources by at least 50 feet with the sole exception of 16± lineal feet of utility line, through necessity, will be needed to connect the existing utility box to the proposed residence”.

County and CDFW staff conducted a site visit on May 6, 2025 to observe site conditions. Based on the site visit, CDFW had concerns of placement of septic system, potential ESHA encroachment, and the proposed fence at southern property line. CDFW recommended: (1) installing low symbolic fencing at the 50 foot buffer line and along the eastern property line to prevent future encroachment on the ESHA, (2) post-trenching, re-establish California oatgrass prairie at a 2:1 ratio, (3) submit a wildlife friendly fence design for the southern property line to be reviewed and approved by the County. The County shall refer the fencing design to CDFW for its review and acceptance, and (4) include a condition of approval to prohibit the use of herbicides and rodenticides on the subject parcel. Condition of Approval No.15 states, “Prior to the issuance of a building permit associated with this CDP, the landowner shall submit a wildlife friendly fence design for the southern property line to be reviewed and approved by the County of Mendocino Planning & Building Services Department (PBS). The County of Mendocino PBS shall refer the fencing design to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife for its review and acceptance. With the added Mitigation Measures, the project would have a less than significant impact on the environment.

- c) **No Impact:** The project site does not contain any state or federally protected wetlands; therefore, no impact is anticipated.
- d) **Less Than a Significant Impact with Mitigation:** The subject parcel is located on a coastal terrace approximately 55 feet above mean sea level. There are no state or federally protected wetlands on the project site. The project proposes to construct a fence at the southern property boundary for privacy. As previously stated, CDFW recommended that the applicant submit a wildlife friendly fence design for southern property boundary be reviewed and approved by the County. The County shall defer the fencing design to CDFW for its review and acceptance. Fences can block or hinder daily wildlife movements, seasonal migrations, and access to forage and water.⁹ Wildlife may avoid areas with too many fences to negotiate.
- e) **Less Than a Significant Impact with Mitigation:** Section 3.1 of the County’s LCP contain several Policies that reference protecting biological resources. Considering the proposed project would trench 16± feet through an ESHA, the proposed project would conflict with LCP Policies 3.1-2 and 3.1-7. Mitigation Measure BIO-1 would offset impacts to the identified resource by revegetating and reseeding the disturbed area at a minimum of a 2:1 ratio. With

⁹ Paige, Christine. A Landowner’s Guide to Wildlife Friendly Fences. 2012. 56 pp. https://fwp.mt.gov/binaries/content/assets/fwp/conservation/land-owner-wildlife-resources/a_landowners_guide_to_wildlife_friendly_fences.pdf

the exception of the trenching, all other development would be located greater than 100 feet from the identified ESHA. With the inclusion of the mitigation measures, the project would have a less than significant impact on the environment.

- f) **No Impact:** The Point Arena Mountain Beaver Habitat Conservation Plan is located 43± miles southeast of the project site. In addition, the project is not situated adjacent or within any parcel managed by the Mendocino Redwood Company. The project would have no impact on any Habitat Conservation Plan.

MITIGATION MEASURES:

BIO-1 Mitigation Measure: Post-trenching and installation of the low symbolic fence within the California oatgrass prairie and associated buffer, the landowner and/or contractor shall seed and revegetate disturbed areas with California oatgrass seed mix (*Danthonia californica* grassland association). Revegetating and reseeding shall be required to replace the California oatgrass meadow at a minimum ratio of 2:1 to restore the resource and protective values of the buffer area. The landowner shall be held responsible for implementation and monitoring.

BIO-2 Mitigation Measure: The landowner is responsible for the installation of low symbolic fencing at the 50-foot buffer line north, west, and south of the California oatgrass prairie (ESHA) and along the eastern property boundary to prevent future encroachment. The low symbolic fencing along the eastern property line placement in ESHA shall be minimal but clearly convey its intended purpose.

BIO-3 Mitigation Measure: All fencing on the property shall be wildlife friendly to not interfere with the movement of any native resident or wildlife species.

FINDINGS: The proposed project would have **LESS THAN A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION** on Biological Resources.

5.5 CULTURAL RESOURCES

WOULD THE PROJECT:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to §15064.5?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archeological resource pursuant to §15064.5?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

DISCUSSION: Archeological resources are governed by MCC Sec. 22.12.090, which echoes state law regarding discovery of artifacts and states, in part, *“It shall be unlawful, prohibited, and a misdemeanor for any person knowingly to disturb, or cause to be disturbed, in any fashion whatsoever, or to excavate, or cause to be excavated, to any extent whatsoever, an archeological site without complying with the provisions of this section”*. MCC Section 22.12.090 governs discovery and treatment of archeological resources, while Section 22.12.100 speaks directly to the discovery of human remains and codifies the procedures by which said discovery shall be handled. Pursuant to California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3, Section 15064.5 *“If an archeological resource is neither a unique archeological nor an historic resource, the effects of the project on those resources shall not be considered a significant effect on the environment.”*

- a-c) **No Impact:** The project, as proposed, includes constructing a driveway, a single-family residence, a garage, a fence, installing a septic system and a culvert at the driveway approach, and connecting to underground utilities. The project was referred to the Northwest Information Center (NWIC) on March 31, 2025. On April 8, 2025, NWIC stated that their office has no record of any previous

cultural resource field survey for the proposed project area conducted by a professional archaeologist or architectural historian. “The proposed project area has the possibility of containing unrecorded archaeological sites due to the proximity of known archaeological sites located in similar environments as the proposed project area. Given this sensitivity and lack of prior survey of the proposed project area, we therefore recommend that a qualified archaeologist conduct further archival and field study of the project area to identify cultural resources.”

Project materials included an Archaeological Survey prepared by William H. Cull dated September 2025. No significant cultural resources were identified on the property. The project was heard by the Archaeological Commission on October 8, 2025, in which, the Commission accepted the survey and requested the Discovery Clause be added as a condition of approval.

Additionally, the project was referred to Cloverdale Rancheria, Cahto Tribe, Potter Valley Tribe, Redwood Valley Rancheria, Sherwood Valley Band of Pomo Indians, and Round Valley Tribe. On April 1, 2025, Sherwood Valley Band of Pomo Indians stated, “The Tribe has no further cultural resource information to share at this time. In the event of an inadvertent discovery Sherwood Valley Band of Pomo Indians is one of the MLD’s of the area. If the NWIC report has recorded cultural resources within the project area, the Tribe may request cultural monitoring on any earth moving phases of the project. The tribal contact is Valerie Stanley”.

MITIGATION MEASURES: None.

FINDINGS: The proposed project would have **NO IMPACT** on Cultural Resources.

5.6 ENERGY

WOULD THE PROJECT:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Result in a potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy, or wasteful use of energy resources, during project construction or operation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

DISCUSSION: On October 7, 2015, Governor Edmund G. Brown, Jr. signed into law Senate Bill (SB) 350, known as the Clean Energy and Pollution Reduction Act of 2015 (De León, Chapter 547, Statutes of 2015), which sets ambitious annual targets for energy efficiency and renewable electricity aimed at reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. SB 350 requires the California Energy Commission to establish annual energy efficiency targets that will achieve a cumulative doubling of statewide energy efficiency savings and demand reductions in electricity and natural gas final end uses by January 1, 2030. This mandate is one of the primary measures to help the state achieve its long-term climate goal of reducing GHG emissions to 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030. The proposed SB 350 doubling target for electricity increases from 7,286 gigawatt hours (GWh) in 2015 up to 82,870 GWh in 2029. For natural gas, the proposed SB 350 doubling target increases from 42 million of therms (MM) in 2015 up to 1,174 MM in 2029 (CEC, 2017).

Permanent structures constructed on-site would be subject to Part 6 (California Energy Code) of Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations, which contains energy conservation standards applicable to residential and non-residential buildings throughout California. The 2019 Building Energy Efficiency Standards are designed to reduce wasteful, uneconomic, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy, and enhance outdoor and indoor environmental quality. It is estimated that single-family homes built with the 2019 standards will use about 7 percent less energy due to energy efficiency measures versus those built under the 2016 standards (CEC, 2016).

- a-b) **Less Than a Significant Impact:** The proposed project includes constructing a driveway, single-family residence, a garage, a fence, installing a septic system and a culvert at the driveway approach, and connecting to an existing PG&E box within a public utility easement on the property. The proposed project does not anticipate resulting in a potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy, or wasteful use of energy resources, during project construction or operation, nor would the project conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency. Permanent structures constructed on-site would be subject to Part 6 (California Energy Code) of Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations, which contains energy conservation standards applicable to residential and non-residential buildings throughout California.

MITIGATION MEASURES: None.

FINDINGS: The proposed project would have a **LESS THAN A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT** on Energy.

5.7 GEOLOGY AND SOILS

WOULD THE PROJECT:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iv) Landslides?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Section 1803.5.3 of the California Building Code (2022), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

DISCUSSION: Mendocino County is in an active earthquake area. Five known faults or fault zones traverse Mendocino County and are considered potentially active or active. The San Andreas Fault traverses the southwest corner of the county and continues offshore north of Manchester. It can generate very strong earthquakes. The last major earthquake on this portion of the San Andreas Fault was the 1906 San Francisco earthquake, estimated at a magnitude 7.9. This earthquake caused severe shaking in Mendocino

County and extensive structural damage, particularly along the county's southern coast. Ground rupture associated with this earthquake occurred from Santa Cruz to Manchester and offshore. It is reported that the lateral displacement across the fault was as much as 25 feet in Manchester during the 1906 earthquake. Since the 1906 earthquake, very little seismic activity has been recorded on the San Andreas Fault from San Francisco north. The vast majority of Mendocino County is underlain by bedrock of the Franciscan Formation.

Thick soil development and landslides very commonly cover the underlying bedrock throughout the county. Due to the weak and deformed nature of the Franciscan rocks, they are prone to deep weathering and development of thick overlying soils. Soil deposits in swales and on the flanks of slopes commonly contain substantial amounts of clay and weathered rock fragments up to boulder size. These soils can be unstable when wet and are prone to slides. Land sliding of such soils is widespread in Mendocino County, particularly in the eastern belt of the Franciscan Formation beneath the eastern portion of the county. Human activities that affect vegetation, slope gradients, and drainage processes can also contribute to landslides and erosion.

Landslides in Mendocino County have been a major part of the natural erosion process for tens of thousands of years. The rainy wet winters and relatively dry summers, the mountainous terrain, and commonly weak bedrock conditions all contribute to the development of landslides. Seismic shaking can also be a triggering mechanism. Activities of man that affect vegetation, slope gradients, and drainage processes can also contribute to land sliding and erosion. In general, most rock formations in Mendocino County are associated with the Franciscan Formation, which is known to have poor slope stability characteristics. Slope stability characteristics in the Maacama fault zone are typically very poor as well. Along the coast, undercutting of the coastal bluffs by wave action makes the bluffs particularly susceptible to rock fall and slope failures. In many areas, landslides along roadways create traffic hazards following winter storms (and delays during the summer months when repairs are made).

- a) **Less Than a Significant Impact:** The LCP Land Capabilities map indicates the subject parcel is sited on Beach Deposits and Stream Alluvium and Terraces which is associated with Intermediate Shaking. The project site is not located in an identified Earthquake Fault Zone.¹⁰ According to the California Geological Survey (CGS) Earthquake Zones map, the closest known active fault to the site is the San Andreas, located 27± miles south of the project site in north Manchester. Future damaging earthquakes could occur on any fault systems during the lifetime of the proposed project. The project site does not contain evidence of landsliding on or adjacent to the project site. The parcel has not been identified as a zone of required investigation per CGS. Therefore, the project would not directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects including the risk of loss, injury or death.
- b) **Less than a Significant Impact:** The project does not propose any grading. However, the project proposes trenching for utilities and removing soil to install a culvert at the driveway approach and constructing a fence at the southern property boundary. The proposed trenching would take place from an existing PG&E box via the driveway and to the proposed residence. The trench would be backfilled and seeded with California oatgrass prairie. The proposed septic area would also be backfilled post-installation. Soil not used for backfilling would be laid out on the property for landscaping.
- c) **No Impact:** The U.S Landslide Inventory and Susceptibility map indicates the subject parcel is located in an area with very low landslide potential.¹¹ The parcel is sited approximately 265 feet east of a susceptible landslide area. The California Geological Survey (CGS) Earthquake Zones map indicates the parcel is not sited in an area susceptible to liquefaction. Considering the parcel is not associated with liquefaction or landsliding, lateral spreading is not a concern.
- d-f) **Less Than a Significant Impact:** The subject parcel is sited on a relatively flat coastal marine terrace and the Cabrillo-Heeser complex soil type. The vegetation is mainly perennial grasses

¹⁰ Earthquake Zones. Department of Conservation - California Geological Survey. <https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/cgs/informationwarehouse/eqzapp/>. accessed September 26, 2025.

¹¹ U.S Landslide Inventory and Susceptibility. U.S Geological Survey. <https://www.usgs.gov/tools/us-landslide-inventory-and-susceptibility-map#science>. Accessed September 29, 2025.

and forbs on said soil type.¹² The Soil Survey of Mendocino County states that “the main limitations affecting homesite development are the moderately slow permeability and the seasonally saturated soil conditions of the Cabrillo soil and the poor filtering capacity in the substratum of the Heeser soil. The property does not contain expansive soils or soils incapable of supporting a septic system. Project materials included a Site Evaluation Report (SER) prepared by Carl Rittiman & Associates Inc. for a septic system. The SER was approved by the Division of Environmental Health. Carl Rittiman and Associates stated, “based on the available area of the parcel, which relates to Environmental Health Department codes (such as setbacks, property line setbacks, and remaining out of easement areas) and ESHA buffer zones, it is highly unlikely that an acceptable leach field area could be designed in another location. Therefore, the current leach field location is the best overall location for the parcel.” Considering the parcel is predominantly flat and not on a blufftop, the project would have a less than significant impact and would not directly nor indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature. Best Management Practices have been included in the Conditions of Approval in the Staff Report.

MITIGATION MEASURES: None.

FINDINGS: The proposed project would have **A LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT** on Geology and Soils.

5.8 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

WOULD THE PROJECT:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions (GHG), either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

DISCUSSION: Senate Bill No. 32 (SB32), the California Global Warming Solutions Act, 2006 recognized that California is a source of substantial amounts of greenhouse gas (GHG) emission which poses a serious threat to the economic well-being, public health, natural resources, and the environment of California. SB 32 established a state goal of reducing GHG emissions to 40% below the 1990 level by 2030. In order to address global climate change associated with air quality impacts, CEQA statutes were amended to require evaluation of GHG emission, which includes criteria air pollutants (regional) and toxic air contaminants (local). As a result, Mendocino County Air Quality Management District (AQMD) adopted CEQA thresholds of significance for criteria air pollutants and GHGs and issued updated CEQA guidelines to assist lead agencies in evaluating air quality impacts to determine if a project’s individual emissions would be cumulatively considerable. According to the AQMD, these CEQA thresholds of significance are the same as those, which have been adopted by the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD). Pursuant to the BAAQMD CEQA Guidelines, the threshold for project significance of GHG emissions is 1,100 metric tons CO₂e (CO₂ equivalent) of operation emission on an annual basis. Additionally, Mendocino County’s building code requires new construction to include energy efficient materials and fixtures.

- a) **Less Than a Significant Impact:** As previously discussed in the Air Quality section, the project site is located within the North Coast Air Basin (Basin) which is governed by the MCAQMD. The MCAQMD operates air monitoring stations in Fort Bragg, Ukiah, and Willits. Based on the results of monitoring, the entire County has been determined to be in attainment for all Federal criteria air pollutants and in attainment for all State standards except Particulate Matter less than 10 microns in size (PM₁₀). The proposed project involves graveling a driveway, constructing a single-family residence, paving a driveway at a later date, installing a septic

¹² Soil Survey of Western Mendocino County.

system and a culvert at the driveway approach, and connecting utility hookups. The MCAQMD has adopted a Particulate Matter (PM) Attainment Plan which includes a description of local air quality, the sources of local PM emissions, and recommended control measures to reduce future PM levels.

- b) **No Impact:** There are no adopted local plans for reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases.

MITIGATION MEASURES: None

FINDINGS: The proposed project would have a **LESS THAN SIGNICANT IMPACT** on Greenhouse Gas Emissions.

5.9 HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

WOULD THE PROJECT:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Impair implementation of, or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
g) Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

DISCUSSION: Hazardous materials, including hazardous substances and wastes, are regulated by many state and federal laws. Statutes govern the generation, treatment, storage, and disposal of hazardous materials, substances, and waste as well as the investigation and mitigation of waste releases, air and water quality, human health, and land use. The term "hazardous materials," as used in this section, includes all materials defined in the California Health and Safety Code: A material that, because of its quantity, concentration, or physical or chemical characteristics, poses a significant present or potential hazard to human health and safety or to the environment if released into the workplace or the environment.

The primary federal laws regulating hazardous materials are the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act of 1980 (CERCLA) (42 United States Code [USC] §9601 et seq.) and the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976 (RCRA) 42 USC §6901 et seq.). The purpose of CERCLA, often referred to as "Superfund," is to identify and clean up abandoned contaminated sites so

that public health and welfare are not compromised. The RCRA provides for “cradle-to-grave” regulation of hazardous waste generated by operating entities.

Mendocino County has adopted numerous hazard management and mitigation plans including, but not limited to, Community Wildfire Protection Plan, Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan, Hazardous Waste Management Plan (through the California Environmental Reporting System), and Operational Area Emergency Plan. On September 13, 2016, the County adopted the Mendocino County Operational Area Emergency Operations Plan (County EOP), under Resolution Number 16-119. As noted on the Plans and Publications webpage of the Mendocino County Office of Emergency Services (MCOES), the Mendocino County EOP, which complies with local ordinances, state law, and state and federal emergency planning guidance, serves as the primary guide for coordinating and responding to all emergencies and disasters within Mendocino County. The purpose of the County EOP is to “facilitate multiagency and multi-jurisdictional coordination during emergency operations, particularly between the County, local and tribal governments, special districts as well as state and Federal agencies”.¹³

Policies in the Mendocino County General Plan emphasize source reduction and recycling of hazardous wastes and express a preference for onsite hazardous waste treatment over offsite treatment. The Hazardous Waste Management Plan proposed a number of hazardous waste programs and set forth criteria to guide the siting of new offsite hazardous waste facilities. However, to date, no facilities have been cited in the County. The County Division of Environmental Health assumes responsibility for administering hazardous waste generation and treatment regulations. Solid Waste and Hazardous Waste and Materials Management Policy DE-203 states: *All development projects shall include plans and facilities to store and manage solid waste and hazardous materials and wastes in a safe and environmentally sound manner.*

The Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan sets forth the criteria and policies which the Mendocino County Land Use Commission will use in assessing the compatibility between the public use airports in the County and proposed land use development in the areas surrounding them. The aviation system is composed of airports, privately owned aircraft of various types, privately operated aircraft service facilities, and publicly and privately operated airport service facilities. Most aircraft are privately owned, small single or twin-engine planes flown primarily for personal business.

To better address wildfire and evacuation concerns, Mendocino Council of Governments recently completed a Fire Vulnerability Assessment (FVA) for Mendocino County which assists in identifying areas of fire vulnerability and evacuation concerns.¹⁴ The FVA focuses on the areas of the County at greatest risk to wildfire hazards and organizes the analysis into four planning areas within the County. Within each planning area, key roadways, populations, and communities are characterized and critical facilities at risk of fire are identified. The Evacuation Plan identifies evacuation protocols and criteria the County can use for emergency response and preparedness and focuses on key evacuation concerns for the same Planning Areas. For each Planning Area, Evacuation Zones and Maps are identified, which focuses on key areas and concerns to take into consideration during an evacuation event.

- a, b) **Less Than a Significant Impact:** The proposed project involves constructing a driveway, a single-family residence, a garage, a fence, installing a septic system, a culvert at the driveway approach, and trenching to connect to an existing well and an existing PG&E box. In addition, the project proposes installing a temporary travel trailer on the property for construction support. The project site is approximately 150 feet from an existing residence to the east and west. The project anticipates using hazardous materials for construction temporarily. However, the project does not anticipate creating a significant hazard to public health.

The project will establish a residential use involving the routine transport, use, and disposal of hazardous materials in small or limited quantities. These materials include construction materials, household cleaning supplies, and other materials including but not limited to fuel, cleaning solvents, lubricants associated with automobiles, small craft engines, and power tools. Storage of these materials in the open may result in contaminated storm water runoff

¹³ MCOES – Plans and Publications, 2019.

¹⁴ Mendocino Council of Governments. Fire Vulnerability Assessment & Emergency Evacuation Preparedness Plan. October 1, 2020. <https://www.mendocinocog.org/fire-vulnerability-assessment-emergency-evacuation-preparedness-plan-completed>

being discharged into nearby water bodies, including the Pacific Ocean. This potential hazard is not significant if these materials, particularly construction debris, are properly stored on the project site, and then disposed of at an approved collection facility. Cleaning supplies and other household hazardous materials are less of a concern as they are routinely collected with the household waste and transported by waste haulers to approved disposal facilities.

Considering the project is to construct a residence and associated structures, it is assumed that hazardous materials, such as lead, volatile organic compounds, plastics, and other substances, would be used temporarily. The ongoing use of hazardous materials outside of household cleaning supplies is not anticipated. Considering the project site is located in a Municipal Stormwater Program (MS4) area, BMPs have been incorporated into the Conditions of Approval in the Staff Report to capture and minimize runoff and pollution from construction.

- c-g) **No Impact:** The nearest school is Three Rivers Charter School and is located 2.3± miles north of the project site. There is no school within one-quarter mile of the project site. The project site is located west of State Route 1 on a coastal terrace. The proposed project is not located on a site included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5; therefore, the proposed development would not create a significant impact to the public or the environment. The nearest public airport, Fort Bragg Airport, is located 6± miles north of the project site and is therefore not within an airport land use plan. As a result of the project location, there will be no impact in terms of safety hazards for people residing or working in the project area.

MITIGATION MEASURES: None.

FINDINGS: The proposed project would have **LESS THAN A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT** on Hazards or Hazardous Materials.

5.10 HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

WOULD THE PROJECT:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i) result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ii) substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
iii) create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iv) impede or redirect flood flows?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

WOULD THE PROJECT:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
d) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

DISCUSSION: The State and Regional Water Boards are California’s regulatory agencies responsible for ensuring that the quality of the State’s rivers, streams, lakes, wetlands, ocean, and groundwaters is protected. The State Water Board sets statewide policies and plans for the implementation of state and federal laws and regulations. The regional water boards adopt and implement water quality control plans (basin plans), which recognize the unique characteristics of each region with regard to natural water quality; past, present, and potential beneficial uses; and water quality problems. The North Coast Regional Quality Control Board (NCRWQCB) oversees the protection of surface and groundwater resources in the North Coast Region. Per Section 1005.1 of the California Water Code, groundwater is defined as water beneath the surface of the ground, whether or not flowing through known and definite channels. Both surface water and groundwater define a watershed, as they move from higher to lower elevations.

The North Coast Basin Plan is designed to provide a definitive program of actions to preserve and enhance water quality and protect beneficial uses of all regional waters. The Basin Plan designates beneficial uses of surface waters and groundwaters, sets narrative and numeric objectives that must be attained or maintained to protect beneficial uses, defines implementation programs that include specific prohibitions, action plans, and policies to achieve the water quality objectives, and describes the Regional Water Board’s monitoring activities. The Basin Plan implements a number of state and federal laws. The most important are the California Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act and the federal Clean Water Act. Other pertinent state and federal laws include the California Health and Safety Code and the Federal Resource Conservation and Recovery Act.

Water Code Section 13050(d) states: *Waste includes sewage and any and all other waste substances, liquid, solid, gaseous, or radioactive, associated with human habitation, or of human or animal origin, or from any producing, manufacturing, or processing operation, including waste placed within containers of whatever nature prior to, and for purposes of, disposal.* Typical activities and uses that affect water quality include, but are not limited to, discharge of process wastewater from factories, confined animal facilities, construction sites, sewage treatment facilities, and material handling areas which drain into storm drains.

In Mendocino County, groundwater is the main source for municipal and individual domestic water systems, outside of the Ukiah Valley, and contributes significantly to irrigation. Wells throughout Mendocino County support a variety of uses, including domestic, commercial, industrial, agricultural needs, and fire protection. The County’s groundwater is found in two distinct geologic settings: the inland valleys and the mountainous areas. Mountainous areas are underlain by consolidated rocks of the Franciscan Complex, which are commonly dry and generally supply less than 5 gallons per minute of water to wells. Interior valleys are underlain by relatively thick deposits of valley fill, in which yields vary from less than 50 gallons per minute to 1,000 gallons per minute. There are six identified major groundwater basins in Mendocino County. Groundwater recharge is the replacement of water in the groundwater aquifer. Recharge occurs in the form of precipitation, surface runoff that later enters the ground, irrigation, and in some parts of California (but not in Mendocino County) by imported water. Specific information regarding recharge areas for Mendocino County’s groundwater basins is not generally available, but recharge for inland groundwater basins comes primarily from infiltration of precipitation and intercepted runoff in stream channels, and from permeable soils along the margins of valleys. Recharge for coastal groundwater basins takes place in fractured and weathered bedrock and coastal terraces, and along recent alluvial deposits and bedrock formations. If recharge areas are protected from major modification - such as paving, building and gravel removal –it is anticipated that continued recharge will re-supply groundwater reservoirs.

The basic source of all water in Mendocino County is precipitation in the form of rain or snow. Average annual rainfall in Mendocino County ranges from slightly less than 35 inches in the Ukiah area to more than

80 inches near Branscomb. Most of the precipitation falls during the winter, and substantial snowfall is limited to higher elevations. Rainfall is often from storms which move in from the northwest. Virtually no rainfall occurs during the summer months. In 2013, Mendocino County adopted Ordinance No. 4313 Storm Water Runoff Pollution Prevention Procedure which requires that, “any person performing construction and grading work anywhere in the County shall implement appropriate Best Management Practices (BMPs) to prevent the discharge of construction waste, debris or contaminants from construction materials, tools and equipment from entering the storm drainage system.”¹⁵ This ordinance was developed and adopted by Mendocino County to comply with requirements of the County’s National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Phase II Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) General Permit administered by the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB).

- a) **No Impact:** The California State Water Resources Control Board states, “Groundwater quality is related to several factors including geology, climate, and land use. Many naturally occurring chemicals in groundwater are derived from dissolving rocks, soil, and decaying plant material, such as arsenic, uranium, potassium, ammonia, and nitrates. Groundwater can become contaminated by natural processes or by human activities. Human activities, such as agriculture and industrial factories, can mobilize naturally occurring substances like salts, minerals, and nitrate. Some chemical compounds are not naturally occurring in nature, such as pesticides and volatile organic compounds (VOCs). These substances can enter groundwater through spills, irrigation, wastewater percolation fields, leaking underground storage tanks, and other sources. Groundwater quality can also be affected by particulates such as microplastics.”¹⁶

The project involves constructing a driveway, a single-family residence, a garage, installing a culvert at the driveway approach and a septic system, and trenching for connection to utilities. Two wells exist on the property and would be connected to the residence. The project would rely on groundwater for water supply but would not violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements. The proposed septic system would be located greater than 100 feet from the existing wells. Therefore, no impact is anticipated.

- b) **Less Than a Significant Impact:** The proposed single-family residence would rely on groundwater resources for indoor and outdoor uses. The use of groundwater for domestic uses is considered low impact. Therefore, the project would not substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge. The CA State Water Resources Control Board identifies overuse, biological contaminants and industrial pollutants as primary threats to groundwater supply and quality.¹⁷ Per the 2022 California Green Building Standards Code, Title 24, Part 11, regulations for water efficiency and conservation would be adhered to during construction and operation of the project. As proposed, the development would have a less than significant impact on groundwater resources.
- c) **Less Than a Significant Impact:** As discussed previously, the project involves installing a culvert at the driveway approach and graveling and at a later date paving the proposed driveway. The associated Biological Scoping Report prepared by Wynn Coastal Planning & Biology did not observe any streams or rivers on the project site. The project site is relatively flat and not on a blufftop parcel. With the inclusion of Best Management Practices to control erosion and runoff, the project would have a less than significant impact on the environment or public.
- d) **No Impact:** The project site does not contain blufftop geology and is not at risk for tsunamis, flooding or bluff erosion. The project site is not located in a mapped flood zone area by FEMA. There are no large bodies of water in close proximity that may result in a seiche affecting the parcel. As a result, the project would not risk the release of pollutants due to inundation and no impact would occur.

¹⁵ Mendocino County Code Chapter 16.30

¹⁶ The California State Water Resources Control Board Groundwater Ambient Monitoring and Assessment (GAMA) Program. “A Guide for Private Domestic Well Owners (2025)”. https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/gama/docs/wellowner_guide.pdf.

¹⁷ California State Water Resources Control Board. “Groundwater Basics.” Accessed September 30, 2025. https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/groundwater/gw_basics.html.

- e) **No Impact:** The project site is located in a Municipal Stormwater Program (MS4) which is subject to a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit. As previously stated, the project proposes to install a culvert at the driveway approach for stormwater control purposes. Per Mendocino County Code (MCC) Section 16.30.070, Best Management Practices must be implemented in the project scope to the maximum extent practicable to prevent and reduce pollutants from entering storm drainage systems. Therefore, a less than significant impact would occur.

MITIGATION MEASURES: None.

FINDINGS: The proposed project would have **LESS THAN A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT** on Hydrology and Water Quality.

5.11 LAND USE AND PLANNING

WOULD THE PROJECT:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Physically divide an established community?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

DISCUSSION: All lands within the unincorporated portions of Mendocino County are regulated by the General Plan and zoning ordinance, as well as several more locally derived specific plans, such as the Gualala Town Plan, or Ukiah Valley Area Plan. The proposed project is not within the boundaries of a locally derived specific plan. During project referrals, a number of agencies that may have jurisdiction over the project were contacted.

- a, b) **No Impact:** The project site was created by a minor subdivision in 1986 (MS 62-86) and is currently undeveloped. Prior to the creation of the subdivision, the parcel was a 23-acre parcel in a rural area. The parcel is located in an unincorporated area of Fort Bragg. The proposed project would not physically divide an established community, as no established community exists. The project would not cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect. The subject parcel is located in the Hare Creek to Jug Handle Creek Planning Area. As proposed, the project would be consistent with all policies of the LCP and Planning Area.

MITIGATION MEASURES: None.

FINDINGS: The proposed project would have **NO IMPACT** on Land Use and Planning.

5.12 MINERAL RESOURCES

WOULD THE PROJECT:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

WOULD THE PROJECT:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

DISCUSSION: The Surface Mining and Reclamation Act (SMARA) of 1975 provides a comprehensive surface mining and reclamation policy with the regulation of surface mining operations to assure that adverse environmental impacts are minimized, and mined lands are reclaimed to a usable condition. SMARA also encourages the production, conservation, and protection of the state's mineral resources. SMARA requires the State Mining and Geology Board to adopt State policy for the reclamation of mined lands and the conservation of mineral resources.

The most predominant minerals found in Mendocino County are aggregate resources, primarily sand and gravel. Three sources of aggregate materials are present in Mendocino County: quarries, instream gravel, and terrace gravel deposits. The demand for aggregate is typically related to the size of the population, and construction activities, with demand fluctuating from year to year in response to major construction projects, large development activity, and overall economic conditions. After the completion of U.S. 101 in the late 1960s, the bulk of aggregate production and use shifted primarily to residential and related construction. However, since 1990, use has begun to shift back toward highway construction.

a-b) **No Impact:** There are no known mineral resources on the subject parcel. The associated Grant Deed does not indicate any mineral resources exist on the subject parcel. Therefore, the project is not located in an area designated as a locally important mineral recovery site.

MITIGATION MEASURES: None.

FINDINGS: The proposed project would have **NO IMPACT** on Mineral Resources.

5.13 NOISE

WOULD THE PROJECT:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) For a project located within the vicinity of private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

DISCUSSION: Acceptable levels of noise vary depending on the land use. In any one location, the noise level will vary over time, from the lowest background or ambient noise level to temporary increases caused by traffic or other sources. State and federal standards have been established as guidelines for determining the compatibility of a particular use with its noise environment. Mendocino County relies principally on standards in its Noise Element, its Zoning Ordinance, and other County ordinances, and the Mendocino County Airport Comprehensive Land Use Plan to evaluate noise-related impacts of development. Land uses considered noise-sensitive are those in which noise can adversely affect what people are doing on

the land. For example, a residential use is where people live, sleep, and study is generally considered sensitive to noise because noise can disrupt these activities. Churches, schools, and certain kinds of outdoor recreation are also usually considered noise sensitive.

- a) **Less Than a Significant Impact:** The project proposes to construct a driveway (gravel and then pave at a later date), a single-family residence, a garage, install a culvert at driveway approach, a septic system, water tank, and trench for utility connection (water well, electricity, and propane). With the exception of short-term construction-related noise, the proposed development will not create a new source of noise that will impact the community. Noise created by the construction of the proposed development is not anticipated to be significant, and no mitigation is required. There is no noise ordinance within Mendocino County. The proposed development is similar to and compatible with the uses that already exist in the area.
- b) **Less Than a Significant Impact:** Given the small size of the project, it is anticipated that the effects of construction noise levels and vibration would be less than significant through the implementation of standard permit conditions and would be temporary in nature. Standard permit conditions require limiting construction hours within 500 feet of residential uses to the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. weekdays, using quiet models of air compressors and other stationary noise sources where technology exists, use of mufflers on all internal combustion engine-driven equipment, and locating staging areas as far away as possible from noise-sensitive land use areas.

Upon build-out of the project, operational noise would be associated with use of the site for residential purposes. Considering the project would construct a single-family residence and ancillary structures within a residential neighborhood, a less than significant impact would occur.

- c) **No Impact:** The project is not located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or airport land use. The subject parcel is located 6± miles south of the nearest airport, Fort Bragg Airport.

MITIGATION MEASURES: None.

FINDINGS: The proposed project would have **LESS THAN A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT** on Noise.

5.14 POPULATION AND HOUSING

WOULD THE PROJECT:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (e.g., by proposing new homes and/or businesses) or indirectly (e.g., through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

DISCUSSION: The most recent census for Mendocino County was in 2020, with an estimated population of 87,497. The county has undergone cycles of population boom followed by periods of slower growth. For example, the county population increased by approximately 25 percent between 1950 and 1960, but barely grew from 1960 to 1970. Between 1990 and 2000, the population of Mendocino County increased 7.4 percent, a much slower rate of growth than the 20 percent increase from 1980 to 1990. Population growth slowed further from 2000 to 2007, increasing only 4.6 percent.

Mendocino County's Housing Element is designed to facilitate the development of housing adequate to meet the needs of all County residents. The Mendocino Council of Government's (MCOG) Regional Housing Needs Plan assigned the County a production goal of 2,552 housing unit for the unincorporated

area between 2009 and 2014. Goals and policies were set forth in order to facilitate the development of these housing units at a range of sizes and types to address this need.

- a) **No Impact:** The subject parcel was created by a minor subdivision in 1986 and is within a semi developed residential neighborhood. The proposed development would be accessed by a private driveway on Sunset Way and supplied with two on-site wells and a septic system. No new roads or infrastructure is required as a result of the project, therefore, no impact is anticipated.
- b) **No Impact:** The proposed project is to construct a single-family residence and associated structures in a rural area with adjacent residences. The proposed project would not displace existing populations or housing. As proposed, no impact would occur.

MITIGATION MEASURES: None.

FINDINGS: The proposed project would have **NO IMPACT** on Population and Housing.

5.15 PUBLIC SERVICES

a) WOULD THE PROJECT result in substantial adverse Physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
i) Fire protection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ii) Police protection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iii) Schools?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iv) Parks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
v) Other public facilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

DISCUSSION: The Mendocino County Office of Emergency Services (OES) is the primary local coordination agency for emergencies and disasters affecting residents, public infrastructure, and government operations in the Mendocino County Operational Area.¹⁸ Within Mendocino County, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection’s Mendocino Unit (CAL FIRE) along with two city fire departments and 19 fire protection districts/community services districts provide life and property emergency response to the residents and visitors of the County. Police protection services within the unincorporated area of the County are provided by the Mendocino County Sheriff’s Office. Thirteen school districts and two community college districts serve Mendocino County. Each school district comprises various numbers of traditional public schools, charter schools, preschools, adult education, and special training opportunities. Some children in the northwestern part of the county may attend schools operated by the Southern Humboldt Unified School District in Humboldt County.

- a) **Less Than a Significant Impact:** The subject parcel was created by a minor subdivision (MS 62-86) in 1986. The project proposes to construct a single-family residence and associated structures including installing a water tank adjacent to the secondary well. The subject parcel is served by the Fort Bragg Rural Fire Protection District and is located in a high fire hazard area. The project was referred to the Fire District and CAL FIRE on March 31, 2025. As of

¹⁸ County of Mendocino. General Plan - Chapter 3: Development Element. 2009. Revised 2020. <https://www.mendocinocounty.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/54479/638055061911270000>.

September 30, 2025, CAL FIRE has not responded. On March 31, the Fort Bragg Rural Fire Protection District provided no comments. The nearest police station is 2.6± miles northeast of the project site. The proposed project would create a minimal impact on the demand for new fire and police protection facilities.

The subject parcel is located within the Fort Bragg Unified School District, and the nearest public school is Fort Bragg High School located 3.7± miles northeast of the parcel. Due to the small scale of the project, the demand for additional schools is not anticipated to significantly increase. Coastal Mendocino County contains many hiking trails, public beaches, and public state parks. The nearest public park is located 2.7± miles northwest of the project site at Pomo Bluffs Park. The proposed project would not result in adverse demand for additional public parks. As such, the proposed project would be supplied with an onsite well, septic system, electricity, and propane and would have a less than significant impact on public services.

MITIGATION MEASURES: None.

FINDINGS: The proposed project would have **LESS THAN A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT** on Public Services.

5.16 RECREATION

WOULD THE PROJECT:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

DISCUSSION: The County of Mendocino manages a variety of public recreation areas including Low Gap Park in Ukiah, Bower Park in Gualala, Mill Creek Park in Talmage, Faulkner Park in Boonville, Indian Creek Park and Campground in Philo, and the Lion’s Club Park in Redwood Valley, all of which are operated by the Mendocino County Cultural Services Agency. Additionally, the County is host to a variety of national and state parks, reserves, other state protected areas used for the purpose of recreation throughout Mendocino County.¹⁹ Other public recreation sites along the coast are the Wildlife Conservation Board fishing or boating access points at Kibesillah, Noyo, and Navarro, and the Caltrans Chadbourne Gulch scenic easement. There are multiple private campgrounds in the coastal zone, some of which have shoreline access (Wages Creek, Doyle Creek, Albion Flat, Anchor Bay, and Gualala River Redwood Park).²⁰

- a) **Less Than a Significant Impact:** The proposed project to construct a single-family residence, a garage, and associated infrastructure would have a less than significant impact on regional parks or recreational facilities in the County. As noted, the County is host to a variety of state parks, a national park, County parks, and other recreational areas. Pomo Bluffs Park is located 2.7± miles northwest of the subject parcel and is the nearest public park. The project would not substantially increase the use or otherwise affect recreational parks.
- b) **Less Than a Significant Impact:** As proposed, the project would not include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities.

MITIGATION MEASURES: None

¹⁹ Mendocino County Parks Division of General Services. Parks. <https://www.mendocinocounty.gov/departments/general-services/parks>.
²⁰ County of Mendocino. General Plan Coastal Element. 1985. Revised 2021. <https://www.mendocinocounty.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/65985/638587122803630000>.

FINDINGS: The proposed project would have **LESS THAN A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT** on Recreation.

5.17 TRANSPORTATION

WOULD THE PROJECT:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Result in inadequate emergency access?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

DISCUSSION: Since the site is currently undeveloped with the exception of two existing wells, there will be an increase in traffic to and from the site for any future development of the land. It is expected that construction of any project will result in a slight increase in traffic to and from the site, as construction workers arrive and leave the site at the beginning and end of the day, in addition to minor interruption of traffic on adjacent streets, when heavy equipment necessary for project construction is brought to and removed from the site. Once construction is complete, these workers would no longer be required at the site. While the project would contribute incrementally to traffic volumes on local and regional roadways, such incremental increases were considered when the land use designations were assigned to the site. The development proposed on-site is not expected to significantly impact the capacity of the street system, level of service standards established by the County, or the overall effectiveness of the circulation system, nor substantially impact alternative transportation facilities, such as transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities, as a substantial increase in traffic trips or use of alternative transportation facilities is not anticipated. A less than significant impact would occur.

- a) **Less Than a Significant Impact:** The proposed project includes constructing a driveway, a single-family residence, and associated structures. The project site is accessed on Sunset Way (private) via Ocean Drive (County Road 436) and was created by a minor subdivision (MS 62-86) in 1986. Three minor subdivisions were finalized for the Sunset Way neighborhood including said minor subdivision. The subject parcel originally was accessed via Pacific Way, however, as adjacent parcels continued to be subdivided, Sunset Way was created to reduce traffic impacts on Pacific Way (an already developed neighborhood). Mendocino County is rural in nature and does not offer a wide range of transit systems. Policy 3.8-2 of the Coastal Element of the General Plan encourages current studies to be performed to improve certain stretches of Highway 1 and major intersections. The project was referred to the Mendocino County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) and Caltrans on March 31, 2025. No responses have been received. The project, as proposed, is consistent with the density established in the LCP and is considered insignificant. The project does not conflict with any programs, plans, ordinances, or policies addressing circulation systems in this rural county.

- b) **Less Than a Significant Impact:** A significant impact may occur if a project’s vehicle miles traveled (VMT) substantially increase compared to existing VMT. SB 743 updates the way transportation impacts are measured in California for new development projects. This change will help California achieve climate commitments, preserve the environment, and improve health and safety. Among the changes to the guidelines was the removal of vehicle delay and level of service (LOS) from consideration for transportation impacts under CEQA. With the adopted guidelines, transportation impacts are to be evaluated based on a project’s effect on VMT. Under SB 743, over 50 percent of development within the state could forego transportation analysis and mitigation entirely. Development projects that can forego

transportation analysis include affordable housing, housing within ½ mile of transit, and housing projects generating fewer than 110 trips per day. However, the proposed single-family residence and ancillary structures would create a less than significant impact on the density of the neighborhood.

- c) **No Impact:** Sunset Way was created as a result of three minor subdivisions within the neighborhood and is a relatively straight private road located within a 60 foot wide public utility and roadway easement. Each parcel accessed on Sunset Way is greater than one acre in size and contain the public utility and roadway easement on the front boundary lines to decrease traffic hazards. Thus, the project would not substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature or be incompatible with the residential uses in the neighborhood. No impact is anticipated.
- d) **No Impact:** The project would have no impact on Sunset Way or emergency access. The project site was subdivided and planned for residential uses. Thus, the project would not result in inadequate emergency access.

MITIGATION MEASURES: None.

FINDINGS: The proposed project would have **LESS THAN A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT** on Transportation.

5.18 TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

WOULD THE PROJECT:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code §21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
i) Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code §5020.1(k)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
ii) A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code §5024.1? In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code §5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

DISCUSSION: Public Resources Code Section 21074 defines Tribal cultural resources as sites, features, places, cultural landscapes, sacred places, and objects with cultural value to a California Native American tribe that are either included or determined to be eligible for inclusion in the California Register of Historical Resources (California Register) or included in a local register of historical resources, or a resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant. A cultural landscape that meets these criteria is a tribal cultural resource to the extent that the landscape is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape. Historical resources, unique archaeological resources, or non-unique archaeological resources may also be tribal cultural resources if they meet these criteria.

The area known now as Mendocino County has a long history of occupation and use by Native American groups. Notably the Russian and Eel Rivers as well as other watercourses, valleys, and coastal areas provided rich and varied habitat for early human occupation. The first dated chronological periods and related cultural patterns within the region were developed by David A. Fredrickson in his 1973 Ph.D. dissertation²¹ and 1984 regional synthesis.²² This research provides a baseline archaeological information for the area, but there still remains significant gaps in archaeological data for the region that affects our understanding of regional cultural history.

From this understanding, ten (10) Native American tribes had territory within the County’s current borders. The southern third of the County was the home Native Americans speaking the Central Pomo languages. To the north of the Central Pomo groups were the Northern Pomo, who controlled a strip of land extending from the coast to Clear Lake in Lake County. The Coast Yuki occupied a portion of the coast extending from Fort Bragg north to an area slightly north of Rockport. They were linguistically related to a small group, called the Huchnom, living along the South Eel River north of Potter Valley. Both of these smaller groups were related to the Yuki, who were centered in Round Valley. At the far northern end of the county, several groups extended south from Humboldt County. The territory of the Cahto was bounded by Branscomb, Laytonville, and Cummings. The North Fork Wailaki was almost entirely in Mendocino County, along the North Fork of the Eel River. Other groups in this area included the Shelter Cove Sinkyone, the Eel River, and the Pitch Wailaki.

- a) **No Impact:** Project materials included an Archaeological Survey prepared by William H. Cull dated September 2025. No significant cultural resources were identified on the property. The project was heard by the Archaeological Commission on October 8, 2025, in which, the Commission accepted the survey and requested the Discovery Clause be added as a condition of approval to the Staff Report.

Additionally, the project was referred to Cloverdale Rancheria, Cahto Tribe, Potter Valley Tribe, Redwood Valley Rancheria, Sherwood Valley Band of Pomo Indians, and Round Valley Tribe. On April 1, 2025, Sherwood Valley Band of Pomo Indians stated, “The Tribe has no further cultural resource information to share at this time. In the event of an inadvertent discovery Sherwood Valley Band of Pomo Indians is one of the MLD’s of the area. If the NWIC report has recorded cultural resources within the project area, the Tribe may request cultural monitoring on any earth moving phases of the project. The tribal contact is Valerie Stanley”.

MITIGATION MEASURES: None.

FINDINGS: The proposed project would have **NO IMPACT** on Tribal Cultural Resources.

5.19 UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

WOULD THE PROJECT:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or stormwater drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry, and multiple dry years?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

²¹ Fredrickson, David, A. 1973. *Early Cultures of the North Coast of the North Coast Ranges, California*, UC Davis

²² Fredrickson, David, A. 1984. *The North Coastal Region*, California Archaeology

WOULD THE PROJECT:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
c) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider, which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Generate solid waste in excess of state or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

DISCUSSION: Public sewer systems in Mendocino County are provided by cities, special districts, and some private water purveyors. There are 13 major wastewater systems in the county, four of which primarily serve the incorporated cities, but also serve some unincorporated areas. Sewage collected by the Brooktrails Township Community Services District and Meadowbrook Manor Sanitation District is treated at the City of Willits Wastewater Treatment Plant. The City of Ukiah's Wastewater Treatment Plant also processes wastewater collected by the Ukiah Valley Sanitation District. Sewage disposal in the remainder of the county is generally handled by private onsite facilities, primarily septic tank and leach field systems, although alternative engineered wastewater systems may be used.

Solid waste management in Mendocino County has undergone a significant transformation from waste disposal in landfills supplemented by transfer stations to a focus on transfer stations and waste stream diversion. These changes have responded to rigorous water quality and environmental laws, particularly the California Integrated Waste Management Act of 1989 (AB 939). The Act required each city and county to divert 50 percent of its waste stream from landfill disposal by the year 2000 through source reduction, recycling, composting, and other programs. Chapter 3 (Development Element) of the Mendocino County General Plan (2009) notes there are no remaining operating landfills in Mendocino County, and as a result, solid waste generated within the County is exported for disposal to the Potrero Hills Landfill in Solano County. The Potrero Hills Landfill has a maximum permitted throughput of 4,330 tons per day and a remaining capacity of 13.872 million cubic yards and is estimated to remain in operation until February 2048.

Mendocino County's Development Goal DE-21 (Solid Waste) states: *Reduce solid waste sent to landfills by reducing waste, reusing materials, and recycling waste.* Solid Waste and Hazardous Waste and Material Management Policy DE-201 states the County's waste management plan *shall include programs to increase recycling and reuse of materials to reduce landfilled waste.* Mendocino County's Environmental Health Division regulates and inspects more than 50 solid waste facilities in Mendocino County, including: 5 closed/inactive municipal landfills, 3 wood-waste disposal sites, 2 composting facilities, and 11 transfer stations.

- a) **Less Than a Significant Impact with Mitigation:** The project proposes to construct a driveway, a single-family residence, associated structures, install a septic system and a culvert at the driveway approach for stormwater drainage. The project also proposes installing a propane tank and water tank and trenching to an existing PG&E box for electricity. The property is equipped with two onsite wells. The project would not require the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, telecommunication facilities, or electric power. Although the project proposes the new construction of a propane tank, water tank and septic system, a less than significant impact on the environment would occur.

However, the PG&E box exists within the Coastal Oatgrass Prairie environmentally sensitive habitat area, and the project proposes trenching approximately 16 lineal feet to connect to the proposed single-family residence. The project proposes to mitigate the coastal oatgrass prairie at a 2:1 ratio. With the inclusion of the mitigation measure, a less than significant impact would occur.

- b) **No Impact:** The Minor Subdivision (MS 62-86) that created the subject parcel also constructed two wells on the property. A Hydrological Study was conducted in 1986 to provide proof of water. A second Proof of Water test was conducted in 2023, in which the wells are compliant with the required water quantity standards. The project was referred to the Division of Environmental Health on March 31, 2025. No comments were received regarding water quality/quantity. As such, the project would have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project.
- c) **No Impact:** As discussed, the project proposes installing a septic system which would have no impact on wastewater treatment providers. The project was referred to the Division of Environmental Health (DEH) on March 31, 2025. On August 25, 2025, DEH requested that the “applicant confirm that the room labeled “tool shed” on the plans is an unconditioned space and that the driveway and leach mound be a minimum of 8 feet, and walkway must maintain a 5-foot setback from septic tanks”. The applicant submitted a secondary site plan that indicated the leach mound would be 8 ft from the driveway and the walkway would be 5 ft from the septic tank and stated the tool shed would be unconditioned space. The DEH determined that the proposed septic system contains adequate capacity. As such, no impact would occur.
- d, f) **Less Than a Significant Impact:** The project does not anticipate generating solid waste in excess of state or local standards. The proposed project to construct a single-family residence is anticipated to comply with federal, state, and local waste management. Thus, a less than significant impact would occur.

MITIGATION MEASURES: None.

FINDINGS: The proposed project would have **LESS THAN A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT** on Utilities and Service Systems.

5.20 WILDFIRE

If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, WOULD THE PROJECT:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to, pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage challenges?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

DISCUSSION: The County of Mendocino County adopted a *Mendocino County Operational Area Emergency Operations Plan* (County EOP) on September 13, 2016, under Resolution Number 16-119. As noted on the County’s website, the County EOP, which complies with local ordinances, state law, and stated and federal emergency planning guidance, serves as the primary guide for coordinating and responding to all emergencies and disasters within the County. The purpose of the County EOP is to “*facilitate multi-agency and multi-jurisdictional coordination during emergency operations, particularly*

between Mendocino County, local and tribal governments, special districts as well as state and Federal agencies” (County of Mendocino – Plans and Publications, 2019).

The Mendocino County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP), updated in May of 2025, was developed through a collaborative effort by a core team comprised of federal, state, and local agencies, organizations, tribal representatives, and residents. It offers a comprehensive hazard assessment, project recommendations, and background information on the community’s wildland fire environment, including relevant land management plans and agencies. The primary objective of this CWPP is to enhance local communities’ wildfire mitigation capacity by facilitating collaboration with government agencies. This collaboration aims to identify high-risk areas and prioritize efforts in mitigation, fire suppression, and emergency preparedness. Additionally, the CWPP seeks to increase public awareness regarding both natural and human-caused wildland fire risks to lives, safety, and the local economy.²³

Public Resources Code (PRC) §4201-4204 and Government Code 51175-89 direct the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) to map areas of significant fire hazards based on fuels, terrain, weather, and other relevant factors. These zones, referred to as Fire Hazard Severity Zones (FHSZ), define the application of various mitigation strategies to reduce risk associated with wildland fires. CAL FIRE is remapping Fire Hazard Severity Zones (FHSZ) for State Responsibility Areas (SRA) and Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones (VHFHSZ) in Local Responsibility Areas (LRA) to provide updated map zones, based on new data, science, and technology. This specific dataset provides DRAFT boundaries for Very High FHSZs within LRA lands.²⁴ Since these zones were the result of a model that considers influence of fire behavior and embers from adjacent lands, zones for SRA and FRA lands are included to assist in understanding the hazard zoning on LRA lands.

- a-d) **Less Than a Significant Impact:** The proposed project includes constructing a single-family residence, a garage, a driveway, associated structures, and installing a water tank. All proposed electricity and other utility hookups would be installed underground. The project site is sited on a flat coastal terrace approximately 300 feet east of the nearest bluff edge. As proposed, the project would install a culvert at the driveway approach for stormwater purposes. The project anticipates removing one plant near the southern property line. The subject parcel is not located within a flood zone or an area at risk of landsliding. Therefore, the project does not anticipate exposing people or structures to significant risks.

The proposed project was referred to CAL FIRE and the Fort Bragg Rural Fire Protection District on March 31, 2025. As of September 30, 2025, CAL FIRE has not responded. On March 31, 2025, the Fort Bragg Fire Protection District responded with “no comments”. The subject parcel is in a High Fire hazard area.²⁵ As discussed under Section IX, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, above, there are no components of the project that would impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evaluation plan, including the adopted County EOP. The applicant will be required to adhere to all CAL FIRE standards regarding address standards, driveway standards, and defensible space standards.

MITIGATION MEASURES: None.

FINDINGS: The proposed project would have **LESS THAN A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT** on Wildfire.

²³ Mendocino County Operational Area Plans. Mendocino County Emergency Operations Plan. <https://mendoready.org/oes-documents/>.

²⁴ CAL FIRE. Fire Hazard Severity Zone Viewer. <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/6a9cb66bb1824cd98756812af41292a0>.

²⁵ Ibid.

5.21 MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

WOULD THE PROJECT:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Does the project have the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Does the project have environmental effects, which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

DISCUSSION: Certain mandatory findings of significance must be made to comply with CEQA Guidelines §15065. The proposed project has been analyzed and it has been determined that it would not:

- Substantially degrade environmental quality;
- Substantially reduce fish or wildlife habitat;
- Cause a fish or wildlife population to fall below self-sustaining levels;
- Threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community;
- Reduce the numbers or range of a rare, threatened, or endangered species;
- Eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or pre-history;
- Achieve short term goals to the disadvantage of long term goals;
- Have environmental effects that will directly or indirectly cause substantial adverse effects on human beings; or
- Have possible environmental effects that are individually limited but cumulatively considerable when viewed in connection with past, current, and reasonably anticipated future projects.

- a) **Less Than a Significant Impact with Mitigation:** The proposed project includes constructing a single-family residence, a garage, a driveway, associated structures, and trenching to connect to underground utilities. Approximately 16 lineal feet of the California oatgrass prairie would be impacted from the associated trenching. A Reduced Buffer Analysis and Report of Compliance was prepared for the proposed project. Alternative methods to trenching and trenching locations were analyzed. WCPB determined that the proposed trenching location is the best site. County staff determined that trenching would be the most appropriate method to connect to the existing PG&E box. Mitigation Measures have been incorporated to revegetate the disturbed area and enhance the surrounding area with California oatgrass prairie seed at a 2:1 ratio. In addition, a Mitigation Measure has been included to install symbolic fencing along the eastern property line to prevent future encroachment within the identified ESHA.
- b) **Less Than a Significant Impact:** The project does not have impacts that are cumulatively considerable. The project would have no impact on future or current projects.
- c) **No Impact:** The project is not located within an area at risk of flooding, landsliding, tsunamis, earthquake fault zones, or adjacent to a coastal bluff. The project, as proposed, would not have environmental effects, which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly.

MITIGATION MEASURES:

BIO-1 Mitigation Measure: Post-trenching and installation of the low symbolic fence within the California oatgrass prairie and associated buffer, the landowner and/or contractor shall seed and revegetate disturbed areas with California oatgrass seed mix (*Danthonia californica* grassland association). Revegetating and reseeding shall be required to replace the California oatgrass meadow at a minimum ratio of 2:1 to restore the resource and protective values of the buffer area. The landowner shall be held responsible for implementation and monitoring.

BIO-2 Mitigation Measure: The landowner is responsible for the installation of low symbolic fencing at the 50-foot buffer line north, west, and south of the California oatgrass prairie (ESHA) and along the eastern property boundary to prevent future encroachment. The low symbolic fencing along the eastern property line placement in ESHA shall be minimal but clearly convey its intended purpose.

BIO-3 Mitigation Measure: All fencing on the property shall be wildlife friendly to not interfere with the movement of any native resident or wildlife species.

FINDINGS: The proposed project would have **LESS THAN A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION** on Mandatory Findings of Significance.