

SUPERVISOR GLENN McGourty 1st District Report March 2022

Mendocino Inland Water and Power Commission

There seems to be no end to the drama on assuring that water from Eel River continues to flow into the Russian River watershed as it presently does. PG&E is not seeking to relicense the PVP from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) and would like to sell the operation. Congressman Jared Huffman's Two Basin Solution Coalition (stakeholders including Humboldt County, Mendocino Inland Water Power Commission, Sonoma County Water Agency, Round Valley Tribes and Cal Trout) seeking to purchase the Potter Valley Project (PVP) failed to make the deadline with a funding plan to conduct the studies required by FERC. \$18 million are needed to conduct studies on the impacts of removing Scott Dam at Lake Pillsbury to open more salmonid habitat; whether managing the PVP with winter flow of water only through the system is feasible; and how to supply Potter Valley with summer irrigation water if diversions from the Eel River are made only during the winter. The Coalition had hoped that PG&E would fund the studies, but they declined to do so. This makes it unlikely that a plan to purchase the PVP by the Two Basin Solution Coalition can be submitted to FERC by the April 14th 2022 deadline. Since last summer, the PVP has been off line due to a transformer failure, and only a small amount of water has been flowing around the hydro plant (45 cubic feet per second, or CFS). Normal flow would be closer to 270 CFS when power is being generated. When the PVP is operating, this contributes greatly to water stored in Lake Mendocino, some years more than half of what is stored behind Coyote Dam. It would have been possible to run up to 135 CFS by pass flow during the winter this year through the PVP when water flow in the Eel River is high, but when polled by PG&E, the Two Basin Coalition members could not agree to do so with Humboldt County and Cal Trout arguing against any increased diversions from the Eel River System. Even though PG&E is not going to relicense the PVP, they may continue to operate the project for many years as they work through decommissioning all of the infrastructure. Recently they plan on repairing the transformers and resume generating electricity within the next 2 years. The stakeholders representing the Russian River Watershed are totally committed to keeping this valuable water resource available. Stakeholders not included in these discussions are the people of Lake County in which Scott Dam and Lake Pillsbury are located. They have been excluded from the 2 Basin Solution Coalition, even though this part of the project is important to Lake County as a community, a source of water for fighting wildland fires, and an important driver of their tourist economy. In conclusion, the fate of the Potter Valley Project remains very much up in the air, with no real decisions made at this time on its fate.

I serve as Mendocino County's representative on the Mendocino Inland Water and Power Commission and the 2 Basin Solution Coalition.

For more information:

<https://www.pressdemocrat.com/article/news/potter-valley-hydropower-project-license-lapse-sets-stage-for-plans-to-remo/>

Cannabis Ad Hoc

I serve on the Cannabis Ad Hoc with Supervisor John Haschak. The purpose of this Ad Hoc is to assist the process of implementing cannabis policy for Mendocino County, allowing for broader discussions with

cannabis industry members, and a channel for communications besides public expression at the Board of Supervisors meetings where time is limited and stakeholder input can be difficult. The focus of the Ad Hoc is limited to a few pressing issues:

- Cannabis Application Portal: Mendocino County Cannabis Department (MCD) Head Kristin Nevedal and her staff have done an amazing job of organizing the first cohort of legacy grower applicants to package and submit their applications for cultivation licenses on line. Hundreds of cultivation permits are going through this system. There are many questions from growers who are working to complete their applications. Supervisor Haschak and I have held numerous meetings both in person and on line with applicants and MCD staff to help facilitate answers to questions.
- Cannabis Equity Program: Cannabis Equity Grants Program for Local Jurisdictions is being administered by the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz) to support local Cannabis Equity Program which aims to provide funding and services for those hardest hit by the War on Drugs by lowering barriers to cannabis permitting and licensing. The process has not been easy, and people who have qualified for the grants (up to \$50,000) have struggled to get through the program due to an unclear path for executing grant payment. The Ad Hoc is working with both the MCD and county fiscal services to help growers by providing information and policy to make the process function better.
- Improved communications: we have worked with MCD Department Head Kristin Nevedal to hold regular meetings every Friday from 8:30 to 10:00 AM to answer questions:
<https://mendocinocounty.zoom.us/j/87694156954>

Hopkins Fire

The Hopkins Fire in Calpella on Sept. 12, 2021, destroyed 46 structures and damaged 5 more. This was an extraordinary tragedy for those involved. It could have been worse, and the emergency response from local firefighters, Mendocino County Sheriff's office and others was swift and effective, preventing a much worse outcome. On Oct. 22nd, Governor Newsom issued an Emergency Proclamation to Support Counties Recovering from Recent Fires, including the Hopkins Fire in Mendocino County. This allowed Mendocino County to apply for cleanup funds from California Office of Emergency Services. On December 7, 2022, the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors adopted Urgency Ordinance 4498 that requires the cleanup of fire debris and hazard trees on parcels impacted by the fire. The methods of cleanup required by this ordinance include the State Program and the County's Alternative (Private) Program. The state program for the Hopkins Fire is being managed by CalRecycle. Assistant CEO Darcie Antle and Disaster Recovery Field Operations Coordinator Travis Killmer have done an extraordinary job in managing this effort. Most of the sites are cleaned up. Hazardous tree removal is also underway.

As part of the effort, Cal OES required an alternative (private) debris removal program ordinance. Supervisor Haschak and I served on an Ad Hoc to work with county staff to create the ordinance which was adopted by the Board of Supervisors on February 8th. Special thanks to all of the staff who worked with us on the ordinance.

More information: <https://www.mendocinocounty.org/government/executive-office/prevention-recovery-resiliency-mitigation/hopkins-fire>

Redistricting: Mendocino County has successfully completed redistricting. Every ten years, local governments use new census data to redraw their district lines to reflect how local populations have changed. The process went very smoothly thanks to the efforts of the Redistricting Committee including Chair Kyle Farmer, Paula Cohen, Peter McNamee, Dee Pallesen, Mary Ziady and alternate Brian Klovski. County GIS expert Leif Farr created maps to balance population numbers and include “Communities of Interest” (areas with similar demographic and cultural identities). Input was taken from the Board of Supervisors at workshops and public meetings. The new Redistricting Maps were adopted at the December 14th BOS meeting. There are significant changes in the 1st District with new boundaries moving south and east to include the area along Highway 101 south of Burke Hill to the Sonoma County border, including the town of Hopland. I no longer will have my property in 2 districts! (Old District 1 used to end almost on my driveway.) Hopland certainly has more in common with Talmage, Calpella, Redwood Valley and Potter Valley as inland communities with irrigated agricultural ground and diverse communities. I now think of this as the “Russian River Villages District.”

More information: <https://mendovoice.com/2021/11/final-redistricting-map-approved-by-mendocino-county-board-of-supervisors/>

Air Quality Management District (AQMD) Ad Hoc

The AQMD is going through transitions as Director Barbara Moed retires and numerous staff positions are unfilled. Supervisor Dan Gjerde and I are leading an Ad Hoc to develop a plan to restructure and restaff the AQMD. An interim solution for leadership has been to contract with Lake County AQMD Director Doug Gearhart to help us as we recruit staff replacements and help to refocus the AQMD to be an effective department. Deputy CEO Steve Dunncliff is also participating, representing the Executive Office. We hope to have a plan to share with the BOS within one month.

Human Resources (HR) Department Director Ad Hoc

A key vacancy in the Mendocino County government is the HR Director. Besides that position, there are numerous vacancies that must be recruited. As an interim plan, Deputy CEO Cherie Johnson is working with the HR Department and retired Director William Shurtz has come back as a manager to help with a backlog of work. Supervisor Haschak and I are working with Cherie to find a pool of applicants for the Director position, and working with potential head hunter agencies to find a replacement. It is proving difficult to find qualified applicants.

Drought Ad Hoc

Unfortunately, after a promising start to the winter rainfall season, we find ourselves in one of the driest winters on record. Consequently, the Drought Ad Hoc Committee of myself and Supervisor Haschak will once again be working to bring information and resources to Mendocino County communities. By far this was the best Ad Hoc committee that I served on in the past year largely due to the wonderful staffing provided by consultant Josh Metz, and support from Howard Dashiell (DOT), and Interim CEO Darcie Antle. Besides conducting regular and well attended Zoom meetings for the Ad Hoc, Josh Metz

brought together the water professionals in Mendocino County and created very practical relationships with the California Department of Water Resources and State Water Resources Control Board, which has really helped bring in grant dollars:

- Last fall, \$2 million from the Small Community Drought Relief program funds for the water hauling program between the City of Ukiah and Ft. Bragg to be sure that water was available to coastal residents south of Ft. Bragg and around the town of Mendocino.
- The City of Ukiah was also awarded \$264,600 for two potable water pumps expected to help deliver water to neighboring districts through their intertie systems.
- The City of Fort Bragg in Mendocino County will receive \$8.8 million for structural lining and reconstruction of 9,250 feet of pipeline that supplies over half the water used by the city from the DWR Urban Multi Benefit Drought Relief Program
- Redwood Valley community does not have a reliable water source and must purchase surplus water from neighboring districts to meet demands. The district will receive \$1.8 million to drill a new well.
- \$104,000 for Redwood Valley Rancheria for well improvement.

This illustrates how important public/private partnerships can be to create solutions to difficult problems. More information can be found on the county website:

<https://www.mendocinocounty.org/government/mendocino-county-water-agency/drought-water-conservation>

Parks Needs Assessment Ad Hoc:

Supervisor Mulheran and I have been meeting with GSA staff and department head Janelle Rau to assess the needs of our county parks including Bower Park (Gualala), Low Gap Park (Ukiah), Faulkner Park (near Anderson Valley) Indian Creek Park (Philo), Mill Creek Park (near Talmage), Redwood Valley Lions Club Park, Mariposa Park (Redwood Valley), and river access areas in Potter Valley and Ukiah. Overall, the parks are in great need of maintenance, underfunded and yet still used and appreciated by many. We are investigating possible collaborations with both public and private partners, ways to generate revenue for the parks including possible TOT revenue and any creative ideas to bring these facilities up to a higher level of maintenance. A real problem is a lack of budget, the distance between parks, and years of deferred maintenance.

UC Cooperative Extension Staffing

Over a year ago, I helped organize support from counties around the state with the help of RCRC staffer Sidd Nag to lobby to restore the budget of the University of California Cooperative Extension, which had been seriously declining during the past decade. We were successful in getting the Senate Education Finance Chair Senator John Laird to recommend a permanent augmentation to UCCE's budget of \$32 million. These funds helped to fill Farm Advisors and 4-H Program Advisors around the state that had been vacant due to retirements and other reasons among, reducing staffing by nearly 40 percent. These funds will allow almost 80 new hires to replace staff that have left. I am happy to report that my old position of Viticulture Farm Advisor has been filled by Dr. Chris Chen, a bright young PhD from the UC

Davis Department of Viticulture and Enology where he worked with Dr. Andy Walker on breeding drought tolerant rootstocks. (I served on the selection committee as an ad hoc emeritus member.) Chris is a wonderful addition to our UC Cooperative Extension Office in Mendocino County, and joined our staff in January. You can find more information on our UCCE Office (including 4-H):

<https://cemendocino.ucanr.edu//>

Ground Water Sales Commercial Water Hauling Ad Hoc:

Reflecting the concerns and inconvenience to numerous constituents in our county, Supervisor Haschak and I are working on a strategy to stop water hauling for illegal cannabis. There are serious concerns also about ground water levels during a drought from the neighbors of places where well water is being pumped to fill trucks. In consultation with County Counsel, Environmental Health, Planning and Building, and Sheriff Matt Kendall, we are proposing a strategy:

- An ordinance exists for requiring use permits and business licenses for selling drinking water, so it may be possible to amend it to include all water sales
- People selling water will have to have meters on their wells, and track all sales with receipts.
- People hauling water will have to keep a log book with the destination of where they are delivering water. No sales to illegal cannabis operations will be allowed.
- Mendocino County Code Enforcement will check for compliance, inspecting logs of both water purveyors and trucks filling up.
- The Sheriff's Office may also inspect trucks and sales logs on the road as deemed necessary
- Noncompliance will have substantial fines starting at \$1000 per event of illegal or unauthorized sales
- No water hauling at night from 11 AM until dawn. Exceptions can be made for emergencies like fires, road construction or other legitimate uses of water that need to be applied during night hours. Water suppliers needing to do so will register with the Sheriff's Office and Code Enforcement.
- There may also be regulations to monitor ground water elevation from commercial wells to be sure that the groundwater is not being over pumped to the detriment of neighboring wells.

An item is planned for the March 15th BOS Agenda.

Sustainable Agricultural Lands Committee (SALC)

This committee is tasked with protecting agricultural land in Mendocino County through multiple strategies including land trusts, conservation easements, the Williamson Act, succession planning and other creative methods to help farmers and ranchers to keep their land in production and from being subdivided into nonproductive properties. I have been a member since its inception in 2015, and represent Mendocino County BOS on the committee. We are presently working on an agricultural greenhouse gas inventory with a consultants from Ascent Environmental. I am actively reviewing their inventory and making comments to assure that we have an accurate assessment. In the grand scheme of things, agricultural emissions make up about 7% of greenhouse gases in California. Other important contributors include Carol Mandel from the Natural Resource Conservation Service; Jim Donnelly, Mendocino County Ag Department; Devon Jones, Mendocino County Farm Bureau, and Linda MacElwee, Mendocino County Resource Conservation District.

For more information on SALC: https://mcrd.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Ag-Lands-Committee-Fact-Sheet_FINAL.pdf

Strategic Plan

Supervisor John Haschak and I are on the Strategic Plan Ad Hoc that has been working since last summer to create the first Strategic Plan for Mendocino County ever! The BOS selected consultants B. J. Bischoff and Gary Hochman who have worked with numerous counties and private organizations in the Strategic Planning Process, including Napa and Sonoma Counties. Ann Molgaard has served as our project manager of the Strategic Planning Process Task force, consisting of Katie S. Ford, Izen Locatelli, Michael Oliphant, Megan Van Sant, Buffy Bourassa, and Elizabeth Garcia. We have identified 4 “Pillars” or key areas of interest that we want to address during the next 5 years:

- An Effective County Organization
- A Safe and Healthy Community
- A Thriving Economy
- A Prepared and Resilient County

Strategic plans are used to help both the BOS and staff prioritize work plans and budgets to address the issues that are identified as priority for the county. The BOS has been very engaged along with numerous staff members and members of the community. Input has come from multiple employee meetings, surveys, public workshops and other communications. The plan is nearing completion and implementation will begin this budget cycle. My end goal for this is simple: make Mendocino County Government a great place to work that is responsive to the needs and well-being of its citizens.

For more information: <https://www.mendocinocounty.org/government/board-of-supervisors/strategic-plan-task-force>

Redwood Valley Municipal Advisory Council

I try to attend as many of the RVMAC meetings as I can, as it gives me insight to constituents concerns and interests. I recently helped them move their Community Action Plan (CAP) along through the Planning and Building Services Department, where it had been stalled for awhile primarily because of the crushing backlog of work that PBS has been experiencing. The CAP was created over 2 years ago with facilitated public meetings by Cliff Paulin. A good dialog is emerging between the RVMAC and PBS on how Redwood Valley can grow in a way that the community wants to see. Specially thanks to Dolly Riley, Alex di Grassi, Chris Boyd, Sheilah Rogers and PBS staffers Nash Gonzales and Julia Krog. When completed, the CAP will become part of the county’s General Plan.

Ukiah Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency (UVBGS)

The UVBGS was formed in 2017 to create a plan to ensure that the groundwater beneath the Ukiah Valley is managed in a sustainable way. Essentially this means that the volume of water removed every year for human health and safety, commercial and industrial use and agriculture is recharged by nature

and water is not being depleted or mined. This has required extensive studies beginning with the first conceptual model of how the basin functioned as water was used and replaced by nature, which was conducted by Dr. Sam Sandoval from UC Davis (I also participated in the research). Then the model was studied and refined by Larry Walker and Associates under the leadership of Laura Foglia and Amir Mani. I headed the Technical Advisory Committee from 2017 until 2020, working with the TAC members to give technical input and guidance to the consultants. In 2021, I became chair of the UVBGSA, which meets regularly to manage all aspects of the UVBGSA. I am happy to report that our Groundwater Sustainability Plan was finished and submitted to the State Water Resource Agencies. It will be under review for many months before being formally adopted by the state. We also filed our first Groundwater Sustainability Water Report for 2021.

Special thanks to former 1st District Carre Brown and former Deputy CEO Sarah Dukett who did so much to make this project come to life.

If you would like to see the plan (it is pretty technical!):

<https://www.mendocinocounty.org/government/affiliated-agencies/ukiah-valley-basin-gsa/groundwater-sustainability-plan>

East Hills of Ukiah Fire Safety Planning

The neighborhoods of Vichy Hills, El Dorado, and Deerwood are situated in a beautiful setting of oak woodlands and are classic examples of Californian's love of living in nature. These past years we are rethinking that relationship due to the threat of wild fires. All share one way in and one way out via Redemeyer Road, a great concern during fires and floods. I have been working with a group of stakeholders including Mendocino County Department of Transportation, the City of Ukiah, Mendocino County Fire Safe Council, Mendocino County Executive Office, and landowners adjacent to the Vichy Hills subdivision to create an emergency only road that would cross from Deerwood and Eldorado on the east through the City of Ukiah former dump property, up through Vichy Hills and then through private roads on adjacent range and agricultural properties eventually bringing traffic to Sanford Ranch Road. A planning grant has been submitted to the Cal Fire Grants to evaluate if this is feasible and to conduct a preliminary engineering study.