



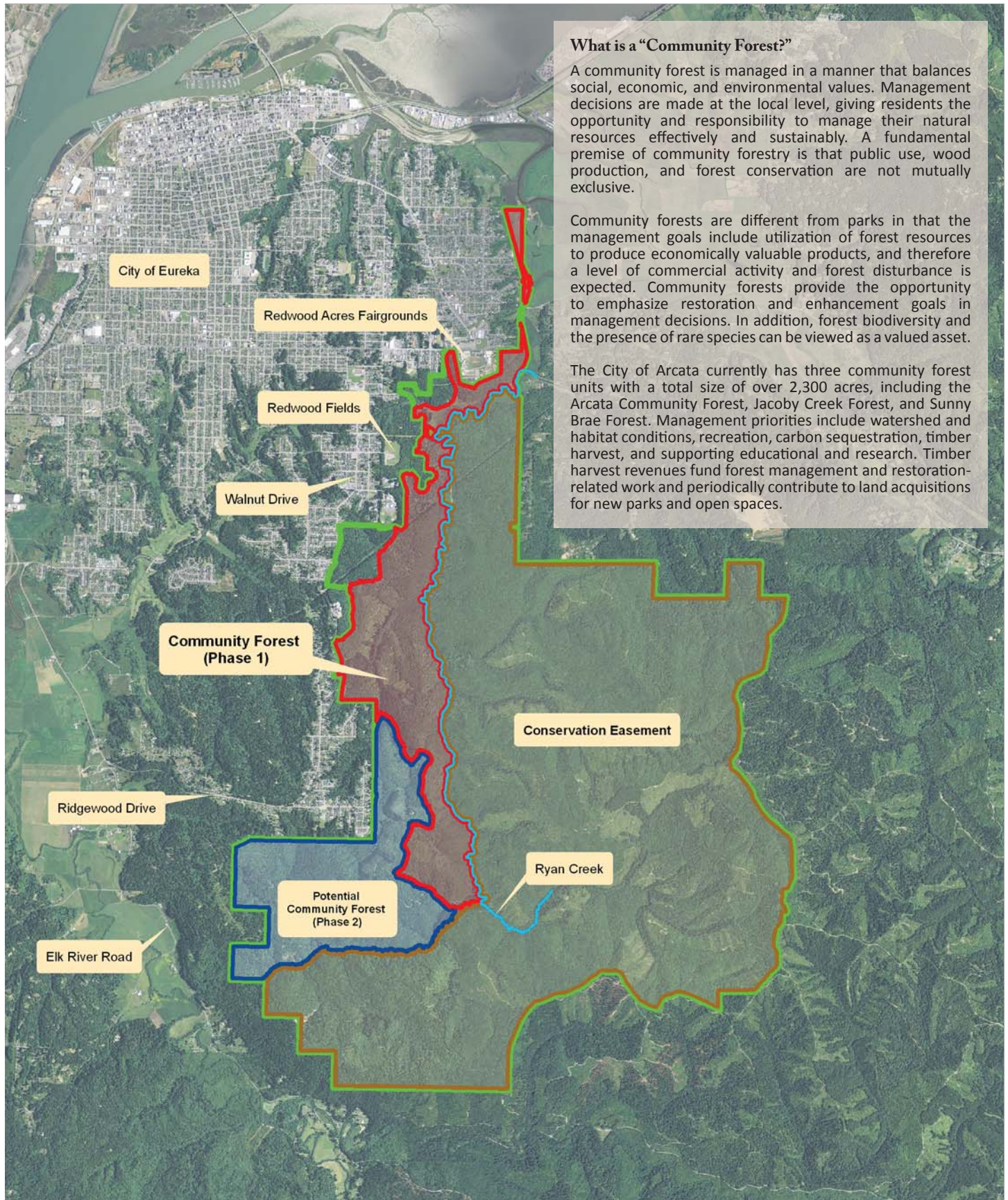
# Proposed McKay Tract Community Forest Project Overview

April 2014



- In this packet:**
- Site location map
  - Project summary
  - Management goals
  - Expected benefits
  - Site history
  - Technical studies
  - Financial aspects
  - What's next?
  - Project contacts

# SITE LOCATION MAP



# PROJECT SUMMARY

## Overview of Proposed Project

The County of Humboldt is considering accepting 1,000 acres of forestland within the McKay Tract, located southeast of Eureka, to own and manage as a community forest. The Trust for Public Land has helped to secure a total of \$6,785,000 from state and federal funding sources to acquire the property (Phase 1) from Green Diamond Resource Company. County funds would not be used to acquire the property, but Humboldt County would be responsible for the costs of managing and maintaining the property.

The community forest would be managed for multiple purposes including public access and recreation, timber harvest, and watershed and resource conservation. Humboldt County and the City of Eureka are coordinating for the proposed community forest as a cooperative, multi-jurisdictional initiative due to the size and complexity of the project and because residents of the greater Eureka area are expected to benefit.



The McKay Tract contains 7,600 acres of forestland within the 9,400-acre Ryan Creek watershed which drains to Humboldt Bay. The watershed is highly productive for timber, primarily coastal redwood and Douglas fir, and provides high-quality habitat for fish and wildlife including the federally- and state listed coho salmon and northern spotted owl. Two parcels within the Phase 1 property are zoned for residential development, but would be retained as forestland if the community forest is established.

The community forest could be managed by Public Works in association with the County Parks and Trails system, which currently totals nearly 950 acres across 17 park units. The Trust for Public Land has pledged to provide \$125,000 to the County to assist with start-up costs.



Continuation of a working forest is essential to financial viability, with revenue generated through timber harvest used to offset the costs of management and maintenance. In addition, the proposed community forest will depend on active public involvement in a variety of forms including donations and fund-raising, trail building and maintenance, trail clean-up, volunteer patrols, restoration activities, advisory support, and educational programs.

Timber harvest revenues will likely need to be re-invested into the property for up to 30 years to provide for development of trails and access points and upgrades of logging roads. Grants and donations would provide additional financial assistance. Projections for revenues and costs have been developed based on the assumption of no new encumbrance to the County General Fund. A loan would be needed to accommodate cash-flow during the start-up period.

Public access points and trails will be developed incrementally in a logical sequence over the course of several years. The timeframe will depend on funding and grant opportunities, volunteer interest, and working through the appropriate planning processes. The best short-term opportunities for access points are Redwood Acres Fairgrounds and Redwood Fields. Key issues for access points and trails include: future development of the McKay Ranch subdivision; routing a trail around the private in-holding residential property; and planning for a future connector road between Walnut Drive and Harris Street.

# MANAGEMENT GOALS & EXPECTED BENEFITS

## Preliminary Management Goals

Management goals express the overarching vision for the community forest and set the course for future management. These preliminary goals were developed based on public input received during the planning process; the statements of purpose contained in the three land acquisition grant agreements; and Forest Stewardship Council Principles and Criteria.

### Goal 1: Forest Stewardship

Practice environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial, and economically viable forest management.

### Goal 2: Environmental Values

Conserve and enhance the environmental values of the forest to maintain its biodiversity, productivity, and ecological processes.

### Goal 3: Working Forest

Maintain a working forest that supports timber-related jobs and economic productivity on a sustainable basis.

### Goal 4: Public Access and Recreation

Provide high-quality recreational opportunities to support active living and enhance quality of life.

### Goal 5: Community involvement

Encourage robust public involvement to ensure that the community forest meets the community's desires and interests and is valued as a community asset.

### Goal 6: Public Safety

Manage the community forest to promote a safe and secure environment for families and visitors of all ages.

### Goal 7: Education

Contribute to an awareness of modern forest management practices and create opportunities for outdoor educational activities.

## Expected Benefits

### Social

The proposed community forest has the potential to enhance the overall quality of life for nearby communities and the greater Eureka area with the following social benefits:

- 1. Recreation** – The community forest would provide a major new area of public land available for recreation and enjoyment of nature and open space. For many residents these opportunities would be within walking distance from home or a short drive away.
- 2. Public Health** – The community forest would provide opportunities for physical activities such as walking, running, bicycling, and horse-riding.
- 3. Education** – The community forest would provide an accessible outdoor classroom for students of all ages.
- 4. Pride and Identity** – The community forest would reinforce the region's identification and connection with redwood forests, support an appreciation of the region's timber heritage, and provide a source of civic pride through the responsibility of managing forestland.
- 5. Open Space** – The community forest would provide a buffer between existing urban residential areas in Cutten and Ridgewood Heights and Green Diamond's retained timberland, and maintain an aesthetic backdrop for the adjacent neighborhoods.
- 6. Reduced traffic** – The community forest would likely cause a net reduction in future traffic levels on Walnut Avenue in the Cutten area by retaining certain residentially-zoned parcels as forestland.



## Economic

The proposed community forest has the potential to provide the following direct and indirect economic benefits:

**1. Maintain Prime Timberland** – The community forest would preserve a portion of Humboldt County’s prime timberland for long-term economic productivity by ensuring that it will not be converted to other non-forestry uses.

**2. Demonstration Working Forest** – The community forest would allow the public to directly observe a working forest, which would promote an increased understanding of the forest products industry and current forest management practices.

**3. Tourism** – The community forest would provide a significant new attraction for tourism, which would support local hotels and restaurants through higher visitation, longer vacation stays, and new special events. In addition, the community forest would help reinforce the region’s marketing identification with the redwoods.

**4. Boost to Redwood Acres** – The community forest would expand the recreational opportunities at Redwood Acres with direct forest access. These opportunities could lead to increased revenues by encouraging higher visitation, more occupancy in the RV park, and more special events.

**5. Future Revenue Source** – After the initial start-up period to address the various infrastructure needs, the community forest could likely provide a source of surplus revenue for the County and the City of Eureka.

**6. Enhance Adjacent Property Values** – Studies have shown that high-quality parks and natural areas usually have a positive impact (5 to 15%) on nearby residential property values (TPL, 2009).

**7. Watershed Services** – The community forest would provide benefits for air and water quality and soil conservation.

**8. Quality of Life** – The community forest would be an attraction for families and members of the workforce.



## Environmental

**1. Maintain Forestland** – Formation of the community forest would avoid permanent conversion of forestland for non-forest purposes.

**2. Shift in Silviculture** – Management of the property would shift from even-age to uneven-age management, with primarily light thinning and selection practices utilized.

**3. Restoration and Enhancement** – The community forest would provide opportunities to emphasize ecological restoration and enhancement goals in forest management.

**4. Restoration Funding** – As a public agency the County would be eligible for grants for restoration work.

**5. Research and Education** – The community forest would provide opportunities for research and education regarding natural resources, watershed processes, and forest management.

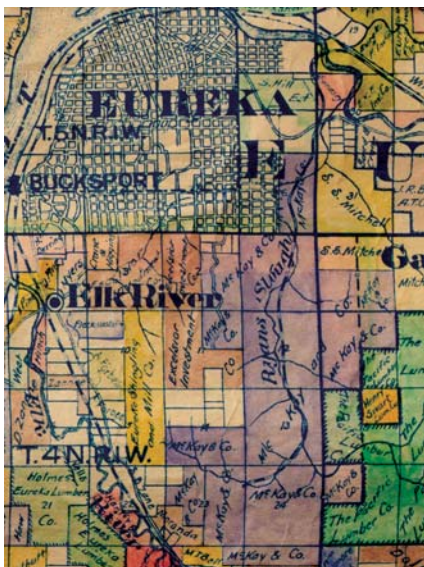


# SITE HISTORY & TECHNICAL STUDIES



## History of the McKay Tract

Local historian Jerry Rohde prepared a report titled “Historic Profile of the McKay – Logging, Ranching, and Railroads” (Rohde, 2014). The history of logging on the property extends back to the 1850s and spans the use of oxen, steam donkeys, tractor skidding, and modern methods. In the early period logs were transported to Eureka Slough and rafted through Humboldt Bay to mills along the Eureka waterfront, including the Occidental mill. Logs were conveyed by railroad to a log-dump on Eureka Slough from the 1880s to the 1930s. The parents of former Humboldt County Supervisor Roger Rodoni leased a house and ranch and within the McKay Tract from 1940 to 1976. The ranch was subsequently converted back to forestland by planting spruce trees in the 1990s.

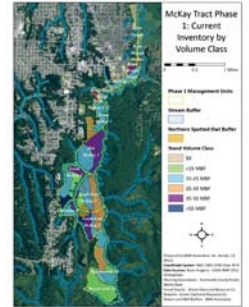


Green Diamond (as its predecessor Simpson Timber Company) took ownership of the McKay Tract from Louisiana-Pacific Corporation in 1998. Previous owners included Georgia-Pacific Corporation; Pacific Conservation Company; McKay & Company; and Ryan, Duff & Company.

## Technical Studies

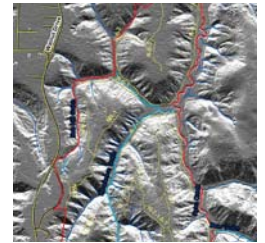
### Timber Management

BBW & Associates developed potential scenarios for future timber harvest and calculated projected costs and revenues. The community forest would be managed primarily with thinning and selection harvest methods to create uneven-aged or multi-aged stands. The management approach is consistent with the City of Arcata’s community forest program which has demonstrated the compatibility of timber harvest with recreation and environmental values.



### Logging Roads

Pacific Watershed Associates evaluated the condition of logging roads on the property (17 miles) and the needs for upgrades or decommissioning. Logging roads would need to be upgraded to meet current standards.



### Transportation & Circulation

LACO Associates performed an analysis of road circulation and traffic levels in the Cutten and southern Eureka area to support consideration of transportation issues in the planning process. The property boundary was adjusted to ensure that a new future connector road between Walnut Drive and Harris Street is not precluded.



### Trails & Access Points

Redwood Acres and Redwood Fields provide the two best short-term opportunities for public access points, however each of these locations has specific issues that need to be resolved before they can be opened to the public.



## Financial Aspects

Planning for the proposed community forest is based on the premise that the forest would be economically self-sustaining over the long-term without reliance on the County's General Fund.

State and federal funds would cover the full purchase price. County funds are not required for land acquisition and the County would receive title without the need for ongoing payments.

Continuation of a working forest is essential to financial viability. The Phase 1 property represents some of the most productive redwood forestland on the North Coast. Timber harvest revenues are projected to increase substantially over several decades as trees grow and stand volume increases; however, projections of timber harvest revenue are uncertain and subject to a variety of risks.

The community forest can be viewed as an economic asset that would be managed similar to other public enterprises like wastewater services, except that revenues are derived

from periodic timber harvest rather than user fees or charges.

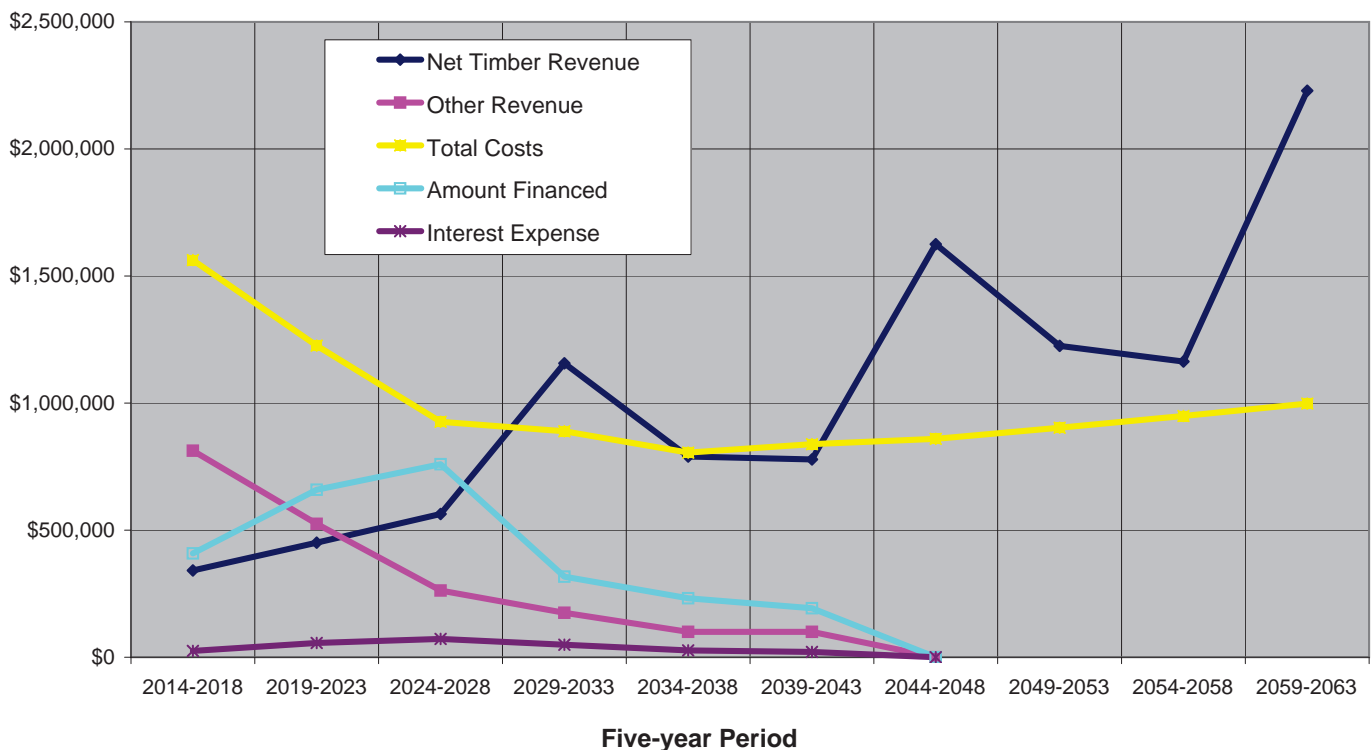
The need to develop access points and trails and upgrade logging roads represents a major infrastructure cost. Timber harvest revenues would need to be re-invested for an extended period of time (up to 30 years) in conjunction with grants and donations, and a loan would be required to accommodate cash-flow during this start-up period. After the start-up period, there is the likelihood of surplus revenues to benefit the County's General Fund.

The County would have flexibility and control over spending. The timeframe for developing trails and access points would substantially depend on grants and donations. If grants and donations are not forthcoming or costs are higher than projected, then progress on site improvements would need to wait until harvest revenues become available.

The City of Arcata's community forest provides a model and proof-of-concept that a community forest can be economically self-sustaining.

## 50-Year Financial Projections Proposed McKay Tract Community Forest

Date Prepared: April 4, 2014



## What's next?

The Board of Supervisors is expected to decide whether to accept the property on April 15. If the decision is affirmative, ownership transfer would likely occur in June. The property would not be open to the public until appropriate access points and trail segments are developed. Public access points and trails would be developed incrementally in a logical sequence over the course of several years. Opening for partial access could potentially occur later in the summer of 2014. The timeframe would depend on fundraising and grant opportunities, volunteer interest, and coordinating with neighboring landowners.

Date	Time	Event	Description
<b>April 7, 2014</b>	6:00 pm	Public meeting at Redwood Acres	Presentation, Q&A
<b>April 8, 2014</b>	10:00 am	Humboldt County Board of Supervisors	Presentation, public comment
<b>April 15, 2014</b>	1:30 pm	Humboldt County Board of Supervisors	Formal decision whether to accept funds for land acquisition

More detailed information about the proposed community forest is included in the Project Report, available on-line at: <http://www.co.humboldt.ca.us/pubworks/mckayforest/>

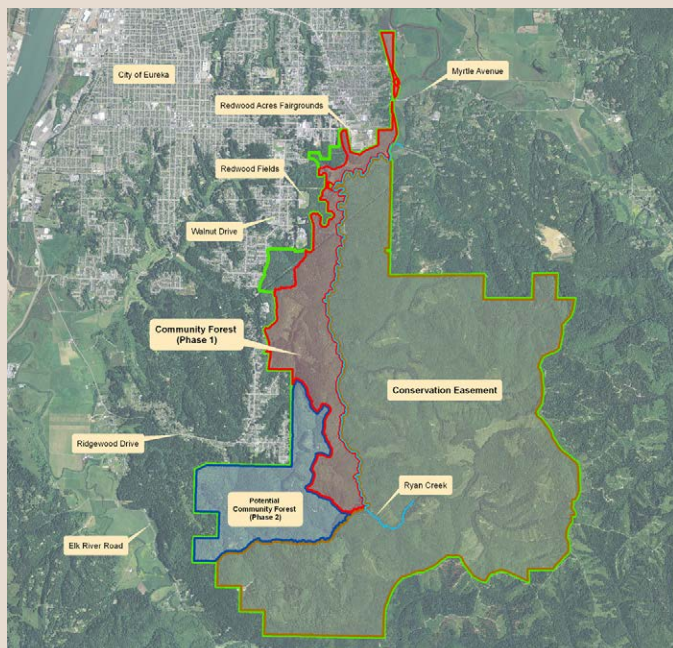
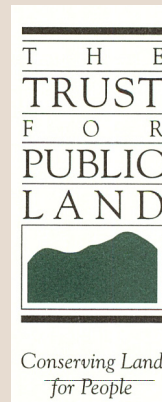
Please direct further questions to:

### Hank Seemann

Deputy Director  
Humboldt County DPW  
[HSeemann@co.humboldt.ca.us](mailto:HSeemann@co.humboldt.ca.us)  
T: 707 268 2680

### Miles Slattery

Parks and Recreation Director  
City of Eureka  
[msslattery@ci.eureka.ca.gov](mailto:msslattery@ci.eureka.ca.gov)  
T: 707 441 4184



*Redwood Acres*

Brochure prepared by:

