

# Lindsay Creek Project Information

## Watershed and Community Based Land Use Assessment Spring 2004

*The Lindsay Creek Project: A Watershed and Community Based Land Use Assessment* is underway in **Humboldt County**, on the coast of northern California. This exciting effort integrates watershed and community values with rural land use planning - and will provide simple and effective tools that could help to change the paradigm of land use planning in rural counties of California... and possibly elsewhere.

### WHY IS THE PROJECT NEEDED?

Humboldt County makes up much of the **'last coastal frontier'** of California. The rural landscapes of California - forests, pasturelands, small historic cities and towns where people enjoy a slower 'pace', and coastal and mountain regions - also support most of the important habitat for threatened and endangered plant, fish, and wildlife species.



Because rural northern California is beginning to experience residential and commercial **development pressures** seen elsewhere in the state, residents are watching their existing quality of life change and seeing conflicts arise between development efforts, resource management and ecological needs.

Traditional land use planning processes based on geo-political frameworks do not usually incorporate watershed values or current and future watershed conditions - in other words, **watershed 'infrastructure'** is not proactively considered in current land use planning processes.

In addition, traditional land use planning may not **engage the community** in ways that develop interest in, understanding of, or agreement with plans that directly impact their quality of life.

### WHAT IS THE PROJECT?

The Natural Resources Services Division of Redwood Community Action Agency in Eureka, California, received a grant of \$200,000 from the State Water Quality Control Board (WQCB) to explore **innovative ways of protecting and enhancing both community and watershed values in the standard land use planning process**. The WQCB project will be completed by March, 2005.

This model effort **integrates land use planning, watershed assessment, and citizen engagement** based on efforts in a demonstration watershed centered around the community of Fieldbrook in Humboldt County. Primary outcomes of The Lindsay Creek Project will be land use recommendations - a **'strategy'** for the Lindsay Creek watershed - and new land use planning tools documented in a **'handbook'** for land use planners, community members, watershed groups and elected officials.



A project of the:  
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### Project Team

- Stillwater Sciences
- Dr. Michael Smith, Humboldt State University
- Nancy Reichard, Net Gain
- Center for Economic & Environmental Development

### Project Cooperators... so far

- Humboldt Bay Municipal Water District
- California Department of Fish & Game
- California Coastal Commission
- Humboldt County Community Development Department GIS
- Regional Water Quality Control Board
- Lindsay Creek Watershed Group

**Funding** for this project has been provided through a contract with the **State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB)** pursuant to the Costa-Machado Water Act of 2000 (Proposition 13) and any amendments thereto for the implementation of California's Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Program. The contents of this document do not necessarily reflect the views and policies of the SWRCB, nor does mention of trade names or commercial products constitute endorsement or recommendation for use.

## PROJECT TIMELINE

### Summer 2003

- Project Start
- Meetings with Cooperators
- Research and Project Design

### Fall 2003

- Research and Project Design
- Resident Letter and Newsletter
- Stakeholder Interviews
- Data Collection and Mapping

### Winter 2003 - 04

- Resident Survey
- Data Collection and Mapping

### Spring - Summer 2004

- Public Presentation of Data
- Public Workshop, Field Tours
- Determine Priorities and Develop Strategy

### Fall 2004

- Edit Draft Strategy With Community Input
- Develop Handbook

### Winter 2004 - 05

- Final Strategy
- Final Handbook
- Project Completion, Community Celebration

## AN IMPORTANT DISTINCTION

Humboldt County is currently updating its General Plan - the blueprint for future land use in the region. The Lindsay Creek Project and resultant documents are **completely separate from the County's General Plan Update** and Community Planning processes. The project team is working to ensure project outcomes will be useful to the County and residents, and that participants are clear about project scope and limitations. This demonstration watershed was selected in part because the County will soon update the Fieldbrook Community Plan, and project data will assist in their effort.



## INVOLVING THE COMMUNITY

The Lindsay Creek Project is an opportunity for citizens (and decisionmakers) to have access to **clear information and data** from which to make informed choices about future land uses around their community. Information from resident interviews, a ('neighbor-delivered') community survey, meetings with the Lindsay Creek Watershed Group, public presentations of project data, and public

workshops are not individually unique efforts. However, the fact that citizen engagement is a **fundamental part** of an integrated watershed assessment and land use planning process is innovative.

## Reproducible tools from this project will, at a local level, improve:

- Resident and County government understanding of existing watershed conditions, residents' opinions and priorities regarding the future of land use in the watershed, and risks and values associated with land use decisions;
- County government ability to proactively incorporate state and federal environmental regulatory mandates into the land use planning process;
- Quality of the current General Plan Update process with both specific information on the Lindsay Creek watershed and the potential for using this type of process in other watersheds;
- Community understanding of issues important to the upcoming Community Plan Update process (a specific subset of the County General Plan for the project area);
- Strength and effectiveness of the Lindsay Creek Watershed Group; and
- Water quality and fish habitat.

## Regional benefits that the project will provide include:

- Land use planning tools for assessing cumulative impacts;
- A new land use planning paradigm that fundamentally incorporates watershed and community values; and
- A tool in the form of a 'handbook' that allows communities to assess land use decisions and choices through the lens of future watershed health and sustainability.