



## COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

AGENDA ITEM NO.

A-1

For the meeting of: November 3, 2015

Date: October 23, 2015  
To: Board of Supervisors  
From: Supervisor Rex Bohn  
Subject: Fernbridge River Bar Discussion

### RECOMMENDATION(S):

That the Board of Supervisors hear the discussion and take appropriate action, if required.

SOURCE OF FUNDING: N/A

DISCUSSION: Supervisor Bohn has had on going complaints and correspondences about the activities taking place on the Fernbridge River Bar. He has been in contact with several land owners, the Sheriff's Department, Public Works, Fish and Game, and the Fish and Game Advisory Commission. Most recently, he was addressed in a letter from Alexandre Family EcoDairy Farms who is requesting that a County Ordinance be put into place. The issue was then taken up by the Fish and Game Advisory Commission who have had a recent study conducted about the activities taking place in the area. They have sent a letter to the Board with their recommendations in resolving this issue. Supervisor Bohn would like to review the issue with all parties involved.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: N/A

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT: Humboldt County Sheriff's Office; Fish and Game Advisory Commission.

Prepared by Tracy Damico

Signature

### REVIEW:

Auditor \_\_\_\_\_ County Counsel \_\_\_\_\_ Personnel \_\_\_\_\_ Risk Manager \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

### TYPE OF ITEM:

☐ Consent  
☐ Departmental  
☐ Public Hearing  
☒ Other ☐ Board Initiated

### PREVIOUS ACTION/REFERRAL:

Board Order No. \_\_\_\_\_

Meeting of: \_\_\_\_\_

**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT**  
Upon motion of Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_ Seconded by Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_

Ayes  
Nays  
Abstain  
Absent

**SEE ACTION SUMMARY**

and carried by those members present, the Board hereby approves the recommended action contained in this Board report.

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Kathy Hayes, Clerk of the Board

ALTERNATIVES TO STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS: Board discretion.

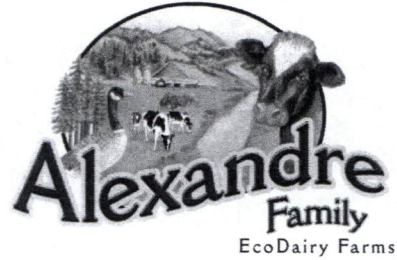
ATTACHMENTS: Letter from Alexandre Family EcoDairy Farms dated 10/1/2015  
Letter from the Fish And Game Advisory Commission dated 10/20/2015



RECEIVED  
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

October 1, 2015

OCT 07 2015  
AM 7 8 9 10 11 12 1 2 3 4 5 6 PM



Chair Estelle Fennell  
Humboldt County Board of Supervisors  
825 5<sup>th</sup> Street  
Eureka, California 95501

RE: Humboldt County – Fernbridge River Bar Shooting

Dear Honorable Board Chair Fennell,

For the last three years, Alexandre Dairy has been aggressively pursuing discussions with the County of Humboldt Community Development Department and Humboldt County Board of Supervisors through Supervisor Rex Bohn the issue of trespassing and unsanctioned sport shooting on the river bar at Fernbridge on our land to the North and Tim Maranda's to the South. The Dairy write's to the Board to find solutions and seek relief to an increasingly dangerous situation that has killed livestock, and has placed our staff in harm's way. The safety of our employees and livestock is of utmost importance to us.

It is the Dairy's understanding that the Humboldt County Fish and Game Commission and the Humboldt County Sheriff's Department addressed this long-overdue issue September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2015. Advocates on both sides of this issue were in attendance to speak passionately on this issue. The Dairy understands based on many arguments that this area has traditionally become an avenue for residents of Humboldt County to shoot firearms freely, without consent from the land owner (Alexandre Dairy) or authority of the County.

On any given day, one to 20 groups of sport enthusiasts can be found discharging their firearms into the river bar bank located on Alexandre Dairy's property. These actions pose a substantial risk to employees, livestock and adjacent residents. On more than one occasion, Alexandre Dairy has lost livestock from stray bullets, has had equipment struck, and had employees running for cover as bullets have whizzed by their heads.

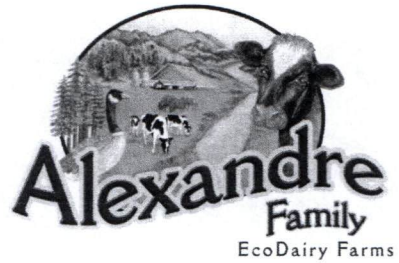
This trespassing has gotten to the point where the rock barriers and gates that have been placed have been removed and torn out and new roads blazed in through our property just to access the river bar. As the aggregation of river bar sediments continues to rise, it will not be long before there is no bank to shoot into, placing our livelihood at risk.

In working with the County, Alexandre Dairy has proposed many options to attempt to resolve this conflict between our landowner rights and safety of our cattle and employees, and the County sports enthusiast's desires to practice shooting sports on our river bar. These proposals have included forming a large 15 foot high earthen bank that would reduce the likelihood of stray bullets and contacting the Humboldt County Sheriff's Department when the Dairy's employees are working in our fields. We have also requested the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors impose an ordinance on the river bar as they did with the Mad River Dunes to ban shooting sports. We have already implemented the later program with the Sheriffs; however it is not working for our staff or our livestock to be calling the Department every time we work in our fields.

— NOW 3rd Asentals —

would like Fish & Game

Sherriff Here  
THANKS



As these activities are not permitted on our lands and the County and the Sheriff have not been willing to accept the liability for continuing to let individuals shoot, , we feel we have been left no alternatives. As discussed in the September Fish and Game Commission meeting, signage as proposed by the Sheriff will not work, as it assumes the Dairy is allowing this trespassing to occur. The Dairy is unwilling to accept the liability for these activities.

We request the Humboldt County BOS impose an ordinance on the river bar under Fernbridge that will not only clean-up our environment but allow for ourselves and our employees to feel safe when traveling our properties once again.

Thank you for your immediate attention to this matter,

Blake Alexandre  
Alexandre Eco Dairy Farms

Cc: Mr. Richard Smith



Humboldt County Fish & Game Advisory Commission  
Post Office Box 922  
Ferndale, CA 95536

Phone: 707-786-4902  
Email: nkaytis4@gmail.com

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October 20, 2015

Humboldt County Board of Supervisors  
825 Fifth Street  
Eureka, CA 95501

Re: Fernbridge Issues

Honorable Supervisors:

A study was conducted by me with the assistance of several others at the request of Supervisor Rex Bohn. The study consisted of personal observation on many occasions over a six month period. It also included the cooperation of PacOut Green Team, which is a group of volunteers who clean up environmentally polluted areas within Humboldt County. I observed many individuals and groups of individuals use the area near the Westerly end of Fernbridge. These individuals used the parking area, river levee and the river bar itself for recreational purposes.

The area on the Westerly bank of the Eel River near Fernbridge has been used for years as a free public area with easy access for outdoor recreational activities. These activities include Salmon and Steelhead fishing, hunting for waterfowl and deer, ATV and motorcycle riding, and other similar activities. Unfortunately, this open and free public access to the area had allowed a few of the users to endanger persons, domestic animals, farm equipment and the environment. The endangerment is caused by two uses, both with serious consequences.

First, the shooting of firearms in an improper manner poses an immediate threat. Farm equipment and farm animals have been struck by bullets fired from the river bank area. Additionally, humans have had near misses by errant bullets. The shooting of game or Target shooting by itself presents no danger if properly conducted. Hunters are required by law to have training that includes safe shooting practices. Hunters must have a "Hunter Safety Card" before they can obtain a hunting license; therefore, hunters pose little or no danger to the area.

The errant bullets are coming from target shooters that are using improper back stops, and in some cases improper technique. Target shooting does not require any safety training. Most target shooters have little knowledge of what is considered "Industry Standards" for safe target shooting. Target ranges in this type of area would require a twenty foot high back bank and eight foot high side banks of composite soils. There is no area near the Westerly bridge abutment that currently complies with the industry standard.

Second, the continued dumping of trash and garbage both on the river bar and in the parking area is a serious environmental pollution issue. Approximately five tons of trash and garbage has been removed by PacOut Green Team, a 501(c) 3 and a volunteer group, over this past year. The trash includes emptied engine oil containers, plastics of all sorts, rubber tires, household appliances, and other human detritus. Many of these deposits of trash and garbage will likely migrate into the river system during winter high water runoff. Oil deposits from those who have drained their engines will affect ground water.

Errant shooting is more than likely accidental; whereas, the dumping of trash and garbage is deliberate. Telling a responsible person that their improper shooting is dangerous or that the shell casing they left behind pollutes the environment will undoubtedly increase safe shooting practices; thereby, reducing bullet escapement making the area safer for all. The trash and garbage is coming from individuals, who by their irresponsible actions demonstrate little care for the environment. Telling them to act more responsible will more than likely have little effect unless it is enforced.

Humboldt County Fish & Game Advisory Commission  
Post Office Box 922  
Ferndale, CA 95536

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Email: nkaytis4@gmail.com

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The Humboldt County Fish and Game Advisory Commission were advised by me and Supervisor Rex Bohn of the issues concerning the Fernbridge area during several of their meetings. Sheriff Mike Downey and his undersheriff also attended a meeting and addressed the commission with his concerns and potential law enforcement's contribution toward solutions. The Commission is aware of the importance of the issues, and by this letter recommends the following action be taken by the Board of Supervisors.

1. Place signage in the area.
  - a. Signs that detail the laws of responsible shooting, and detail dangers or consequences of bullet escapement.
  - b. Signs that detail the laws against garbage dumping, and explain the consequences of continued dumping.
2. Ensure law enforcement presence.
  - a. Facilitate with funding through Measure Z occasional off road patrols of the area by Sheriff's Deputies.
  - b. Encourage the enforcement of current laws concerning shooting and garbage dumping by ensuring funding for the Sheriff's Department.
3. Provide surveillance of the area.
  - a. Chris Justice of Radio Labs in Fortuna, California has stated that he would provide a camera with remote capability free of charge if the County would provide a mounting source and power to operate the camera.
  - b. The County may need to fund or supply a pole and solar battery power source to facilitate this type of surveillance.

The Commission further requests because of the legal nature of the verbiage and construction of the signage that the Board of Supervisors involve County Council and the Sheriff's Department in furthering these recommendations.

Respectfully submitted,



Brad Smith, Commissioner  
1280 Leslie Road  
Eureka, CA 95503  
707-496-4498

Approved to send,  
HUMBOLDT COUNTY FISH & GAME ADVISORY COMMISSION



John Clark, Chairman