



MEMORANDUM

To be presented at the November 19, 2025 City Council meeting

Date: November 19, 2025

To: Arcata City Council

From: Forest Management Committee (FMC)

Re: Forest Management Committee Annual Report to the Arcata City Council for 2024 Activities (January 1, 2024 - December 31, 2024).

Forest Management Committee

Chair: Michael Furniss
Vice Chair: Dennis Halligan
Danny Hagans
Ken Hoffman
Jack Naylor
Erin Kelly
Yana Valachovic
Staff Liaison: Mike McDowall

Community-based forestry is a participatory approach to forest management that strengthens communities' capacity to build vibrant local economies—while protecting and enhancing their local forest ecosystems. By integrating ecological, social, and economic strategies into cohesive approaches to forestry issues, community-based approaches give local residents both the opportunity and the responsibility to manage their natural resources effectively and to enjoy the benefits of that responsibility. -Aspen Institute

Introduction

The Forest Management Committee (FMC) advises the City Council (Council) and City Commissioners on topics relating to forestry, ecology, and wildlife on City-owned forestland. In addition to making recommendations to the City Council on potential amendments to the City's Forest Management Plan, Committee members also review the City's timber harvest operations before they are filed with the California Department of Forestry and conduct a post-harvest field review when operations have been completed.

The following information is a summary of the various projects and activities that involved the Forest Management Committee and the Environmental Services Department during 2024 calendar year. The Committee meets every other month on the second Thursday at 7:00 am or at the call of the chair and also conducts public field trips and evening meetings or workshops on occasion.

General

- The City with guidance from the Forest Management Committee manages the Arcata Community Forest System for the long-term goals of promoting a healthy, late seral forest ecosystem for wildlife and ecological benefits as well as providing quality of life resources (e.g. trails, access to natural areas) for community members. Management priorities include watershed restoration, wildlife habitat, recreation, carbon sequestration, and timber harvest revenue. The City of Arcata manages three separate tracts of Arcata Community Forest System (ACFS) that together comprise approximately 2,449 acres and include the Arcata Community Forest Tract (ACF, ~614 acres), Sunny Brae Forest Tract (SBF, ~336 acres), the Jacoby Creek Forest Tract (JCF, ~1,499 acres).
- Timber harvests on City forestlands are developed to improve the health and ecological functioning of forest stands as well as to provide revenue for continued management of the forest and other priority projects such as land acquisition (both forestland and urban open space), road & trails upgrades, and new recreational opportunities. Approximately 25% of the Arcata Community Forest System's land base is held in no-harvest reserves which include riparian areas, and other sensitive habitats. Planned annual harvests are approximately less than one-half of the annual growth increment, therefore, the forests are accruing volume, structural complexity, and age over time at a significantly faster rate compared to non-managed forestland and most private timberlands in the western United States.

Committee Meeting Dates (2024):

- January 11, 2024 -- Regular Meeting
- March 14, 2024 – Regular Meeting; Canceled
- May 9, 2024 -- Regular Meeting
- July 11, 2024 – Regular Meeting
- September 12, 2024 – Regular Meeting
- October 10, 2024 – Special Meeting
- November 14, 2024 – Regular Meeting; Canceled

Committee Activities, Projects & Field Trips

- The Committee provided input and recommendation to Arcata City Council opposing a Resolution to End Biomass Contracts.

On August 16, 2023, the City Council received a presentation from Dr. Wendy Ring representing Humboldt Coalition for Clean Energy (HCCE) requesting the Council consider a resolution to call on Redwood Coast Energy Authority (RCEA) to terminate its biomass contract with Humboldt Sawmill Company as soon as clean energy is available to replace it and to permanently remove biomass incineration from its portfolio. City Council received the presentation and asked that existing City Committees with a purview related to biomass provide recommendations to the Council on the proposed resolution.

The Committee also received a presentation from Dr. Wendy Ring during their

January 11th, 2024. After the presentation, they passed a motion to oppose the resolution citing opposition to removing or disincentivizing any forestry/wood products infrastructure on the North Coast which is vital to the local forest restoration economy.

- The Committee received presentation by Marie Antoine and Stephen Sillett (Cal Poly Department of Forestry, Fire and Rangeland Management) on reinvigorating canopy biodiversity in redwood forests. The Committee requested a field trip to further discuss concept of possible designation of Potential Elder Trees (PETs) in Arcata Community Forest.
- The Committee Approved the 2023 FMC Annual Report and Michael Furniss (Vice Chair) gave an oral version of the report to City Council on June 5, 2024 Regular Meeting.
- The Committee received presentation by Mark Andre (City of Arcata, Staff Forester; RPF # 2391) on annual Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification. No actions or recommendations were made by the Committee
- The Committee elected Chair and Vice Chair for Fiscal Year 2024-2025. Committee member Michael Furniss was elected Committee Chair and Committee member Dennis Halligan was elected Vice Chair.
- The Committee received presentation by Mark Andre (City of Arcata, Staff Forester; RPF # 2391) on the proposed timber harvests in Jacoby Creek Forest: NTO #23 & NTO #25 (Swaner parcels) & NTO #24 (Section 30). Additional updates included replacement of JCF Hoot Creek bridge and future potential fuels reduction plan for Upper Jacoby Creek Forest (SPI 83 parcel).
- The Committee provided verbal and written input for Community Development and Environmental Services staff for potential modifications to the City's Land Use Code regarding Chapter 9.58 Tree Preservation and Hazardous Tree Removal. The Committee provided no further formal recommendations.

“Measure A” Ad Hoc Committee & FMC Priority Projects:

- The Forest Management Committee provided input for the Open Space, Parks and Trails Special Tax (Measure A) priorities in conjunction with the Parks and Recreation Committee and Wetlands and Creeks Committee. The Committee accepted the offer by Committee members Erin Kelly and Jack Naylor to be part of the Special Tax Ad Hoc Group for 2024.
- In January 2024 the Special Tax Ad Hoc Group discussed potential Open Space, Parks and Trails Special Tax (Measure A) priority projects for 2024-2025, and confirmed priorities related to FMC, Parks & Rec and Wetlands & Creeks. The Ad Hoc Group supported \$45K towards Jacoby Creek Forest Section 30 culvert improvements and a future culvert improvement on Jolly Giant Creek at Granite Avenue. During the adoption of the 2024/25 budget, the City Council adopted these Measure A budget recommendations.
- Some Forest-related Open Space Special Tax projects identified in prior fiscal years as priority projects and still in progress were carried forward into fiscal year 2024/2025. These projects included: Margaret Lane Trailhead Improvement and the creation of alternate trail to Trail 9 in the ACF.

- The Committee provided input and further refinement of a 5-10 year priority list for the Arcata Community Forest System and Forest Management Committee. City staff maintain corresponding maps to complement the priority list.
 - FMC project addition: ACF Forsyth parcel soil restoration and road improvement, Replacement of the Hoot Creek Bridge in Section 30
 - FMC elevated priority status: Creation of Working Forest Management Plan (WFMP), & Fire Management Discussion.

Environmental Services Forest Related Activities & Projects

- City staff completed the 2024 Timber Harvest in Jacoby Creek Forest (NTO #23 & NTO #25; Swaner parcel, Compartment JS-114. The 114 acre Swaner parcel was acquired in 2020 and amended into the City's existing NTMP in 2023; Non-Industrial Timber Management Plan 1-99-NTMP-033 HUM. The 2024 summarized harvest specifics were as follows:

2024 log buyer information:

- Humboldt Redwood Company: \$848/MBF for <30" redwood
- Humboldt Redwood Company: \$913/MBF for >30" redwood
- R&L Lumber Arcata: \$1,062.50/MBF for redwood
- North Fork Lumber Company: \$615/MBF for Douglas-fir & \$415/MBF for grand fir
- Southcoast Lumber Company: \$580/MBF for Douglas-fir & \$300/MBF for Sitka spruce

2024 harvest summary:

- Notice of Timber Operations (NTO): NTO #23 & NTO #25; Jacoby Creek
- Licensed Timber Operator (LTO): George Huffman DBA Northern Roads and Timber
- Total harvest area: ~85 acres
- Total harvest volume: ~798 MBF
- Total sale of timber for 2024: \$577,378.69
 - Redwood: ~433 MBF net
 - Douglas-fir: ~255 MBF net
 - Grand Fir/White fir: ~58 MBF net
 - Sitka Spruce: ~57 MBF net
- Total paid to LTO: \$359,088.66

Beyond the harvest & hauling of the timber, the NTO's included ~880' of new seasonal truck road construction, one new culvert installation, four existing culvert upgrades, and five rock ford crossings.

- Delivered 104 metric tonnes (mT) of forest carbon (as per Climate Action Reserve Tonnes) to various buyers; the sales generated \$2,352 for the City's Forest Fund. Due to the timing of verification for the carbon projects, in 2024 the City had only a small number of credits available to purchase in boutique quantities. The Environmental Services Dept. has continued to maintain and update the carbon registries and anticipates more offsets available for purchase after its next verification is completed (anticipated late 2025/early 2026)

Environmental Services Forest Research and Monitoring

- City staff continued to monitor for various forest wildlife species. Staff completed annual surveys for Northern Spotted Owls and Barred Owls on all City owned forestland. Annual owl survey information is shared with applicable adjacent landowners in a cooperative manner to help facilitate ongoing efforts for spotted owl recovery. Annual owl survey information is also provided to State and Federal agencies as well as the California Natural Diversity Database.
- Climate Action Reserve Projects: The City maintains three voluntary registered carbon sequestration projects through Climate Action Reserve (CAR). All City forest carbon projects were initially registered with Climate Action Reserve (CAR) in 2012 as Improved Forest Management projects. Plots are re-measured approximately every 12 years. Adherence to the CAR's standards ensures emission reductions associated with projects are real, permanent and additional.
 - CAR 575: Sunny Brae Forest Tract (Sunny Brae parcel)
 - CAR 694: Jacoby Creek Forest Tract (Lucchesi parcels)
 - CAR 935: Jacoby Creek Forest Tract (Barnum parcels)

In 2024, City staff with the assistance BBW & Associates Arcata staff completed the City's second measurement of carbon plots located on the Lucchesi parcel of the Jacoby Creek Forest Tract (CAR 694). All field re-measurement and data modeling has been completed and awaits verification; verification for the project is likely to occur in late 2025 or early 2026. City staff have contracted and been working cooperatively with BBW & Associates on the fieldwork inventory process since 2022.

City Forest Roads/Trails/Watershed/Vegetation

- Over 18 miles of roads and trails continue to be maintained at a high standard. City staff continue to improve signage within the forest to encourage further use of cellular based Avenza maps for navigating the trail system and maintaining safe biking speeds. Continued outreach on shared recreational trail use occurs via hardcopy fliers and kiosk signage.
- In 2024, City staff completed a trailhead improvement project on Margaret Lane in the Sunny Brae neighborhood. The existing trailhead was upgraded from a large staircase to gentle slope multi-use trail which allows various recreation uses easier access into the forest. The Margaret Lane trailhead improvement had a more complicated project design due to the improvements following California standards for facilities built within public street right-of-way. The new ramp now enables equestrian access into Sunny Brae Forest and a much more approachable multi-use entrance alternative vs the staircase entrance.
- In 2024, City staff completed the "Once-ler" trail segment in the ACF. The "Once-ler" was the final segment of the envisioned, rehabilitated "Jump Trail" through the 2019 Forsyth acquisition. A new trailhead sign was installed for the completed "Once-ler" leg.
- City Natural Resources (NR) staff annually maintain all safety upgrades on mountain bike specific trails, reapply trail surface rock where needed and maintain all road & trail drainage features and infrastructure. Additionally, NR staff responds and addresses all citizen reports/requests for fallen trees, vegetation growth and trail concerns.

2025 PLANNED FOREST ACTIVITIES

(Some 2025 planned activities may have been completed at time of presenting this report)

- City staff and the FMC Committee anticipate a field trip in fall to visit the completed 2024 timber harvest in the JCF (NTO #23 & NTO #25). Committee members will complete a post-harvest inspection and provide recommendations to staff as needed.
- FMC to conduct a field trip to the proposed 2025 timber harvest area in JCF (NTO #24, Section 30). *This NTO was successfully completed in September 2025, and will be reported on in the 2025 Forest Committee Annual Report.*
- FMC to provide technical expertise and guidance in the purchase and installation of the new Hoot Creek Bridge. *The new Hoot Creek Bridge was successfully purchased and installed as part of NTO #24 and will be reported on in the 2025 Forest Committee Annual Report*
- FMC field trip to consider addition of “Potential Elder Trees” (PETs) into City forest management. *The field trip occurred in July 2025 and will be reported on in the 2025 Forest Committee Annual Report.*
- FMC to continue involvement in the Non-Industrial Timber Management Plan (NTMP) amendments.
- FMC to coordinate with other City advisory committees on matters of mutual interest such as the Redwood Park Master Plan and Open Space, Parks & Trails Special Tax expenditures oversight.
- City staff and FMC to continue to strengthen cooperative partnerships with State and Federal agencies, Cal Poly Humboldt, Indigenous Tribes, USFS Redwood Sciences Lab and College of the Redwoods to involve students, faculty and scientists in additional forest research projects. Additionally, ES staff to continue work with Cal Poly staff on long-term upper Jacoby Creek Forest data sharing and planning.
- Continue involvement with recreational trail construction and other identified trail priorities
- Continue to strengthen working relationships with the Wiyot Tribe through targeted outreach.
- Obtain approval of a long-term Northern Spotted Owl management plan with State agencies including CalFire and CDFW (specifically a Spotted Owl Resource Plan; SORP).
- Complete verification for all City carbon projects: Sunny Brae Forest (CAR 575), JCF Lucchesi (CAR 694) & JCF Barnum (CAR935). Pre-verification additional fieldwork to be performed by City NR staff.
- Seek cost share funding from the California Forest Improvement Program (CFIP) or other grant sources for habitat, road and timber stand improvement work.
- Continued collaboration with adjacent landowners on cooperative road use agreement and road improvements for City forestlands.

2024 Forest Photos



Jacoby Creek Forest during owl surveys (JCF Tract; Sec 30)



Jacoby Creek (with 1950s USGS monitoring weir)



Northern Spotted Owl during survey work (JCF Tract; Sec 30)



Mountain lion pair during wildlife camera monitoring (Upper JCF Tract; Lucchesi parcel)



Elk during wildlife camera monitoring (Upper JCF Tract; Lucchesi parcel)



“Original” Hoot Creek Bridge: installed ~1987 & replaced in 2025 (JCF Tract Section 30)



“New” Hoot Creek Bridge: installed in Aug.2025 with NTO #24 (JCF Tract Section 30)



Completed timber harvest; NTOs #23 & #25 (JCF Tract; Swaner parcel)



New seasonal truck road constructed during NTO #23 (JCF Tract; Barnum parcel)