

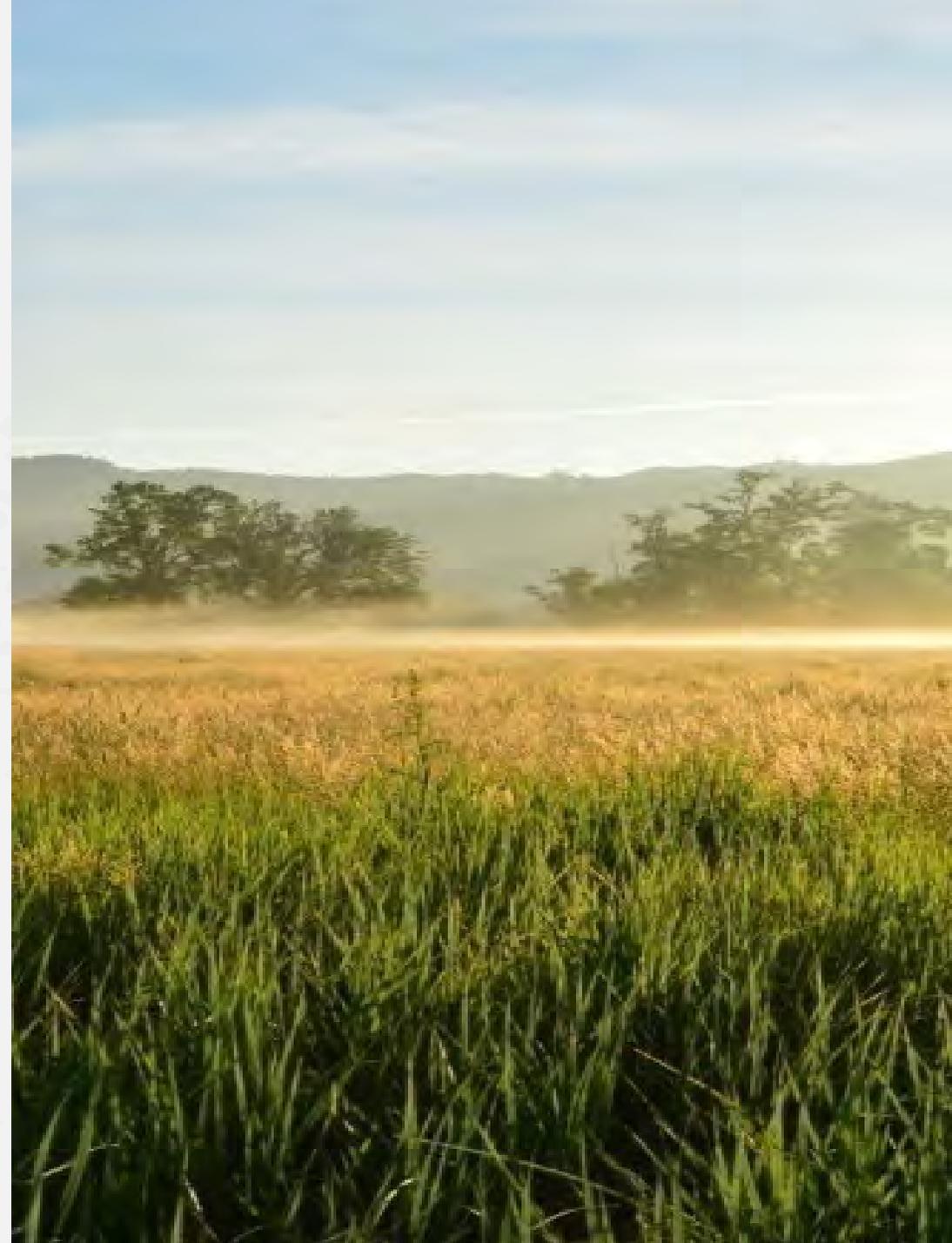
# POTTER VALLEY PROJECT



# INTRODUCTION

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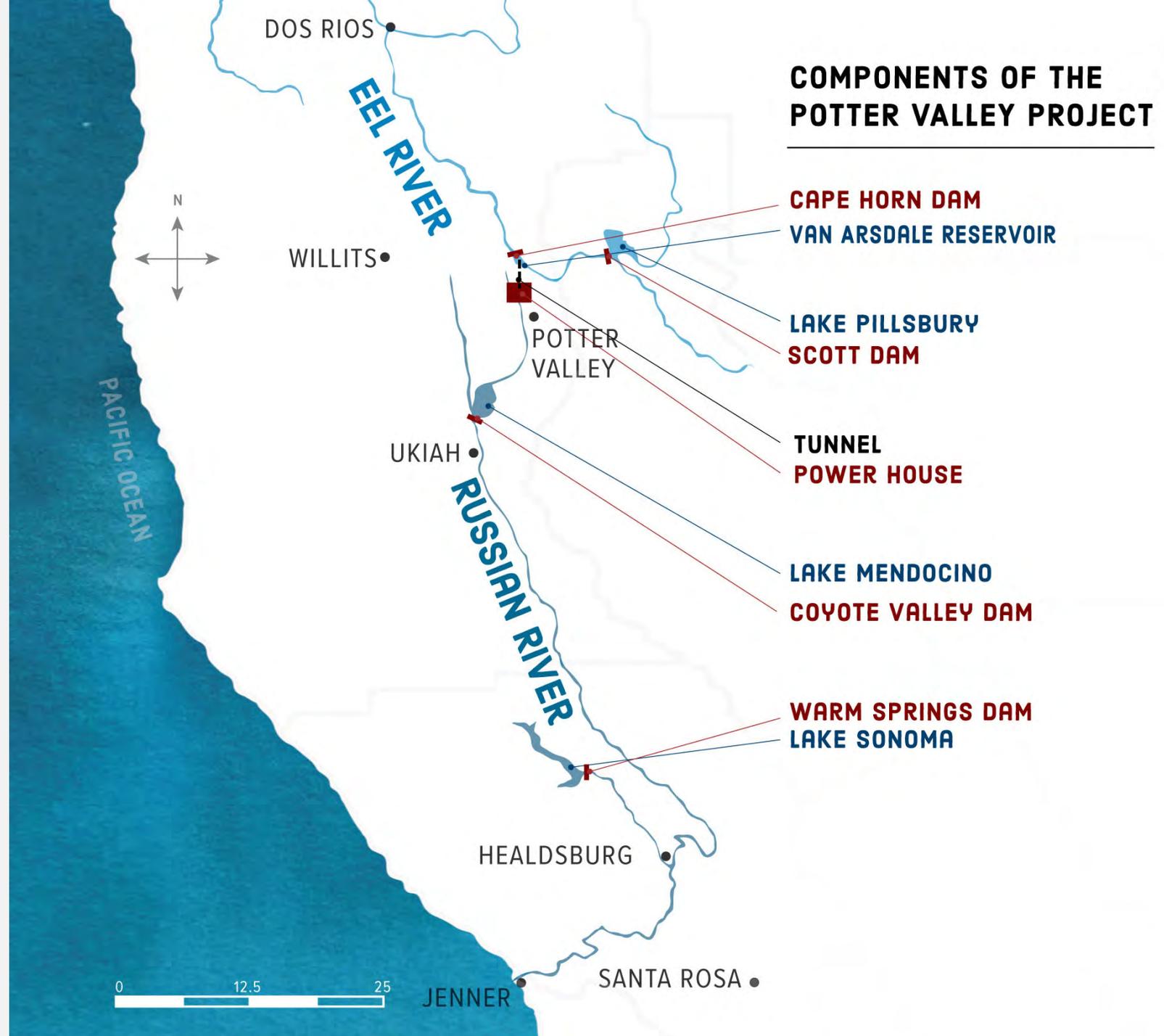
Since 1922, we've had year-round water and enough power to create thriving communities from Potter Valley to Hopland and beyond. That water supply may be threatened because of PG&E's recent decision to give up the Potter Valley Project.



# WHAT IS IT?

The Potter Valley Project is a diversion of water from the Eel River to the Russian River with an accompanying power station that provides water and hydropower downstream.

The name is deceiving. It could be called the Northern California Water Project because it affects 600,000 people from Mendocino County through Marin County.



# OUR GOAL

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Maintain the quality of life for local communities while protecting our precious natural resources.

It is unlikely that any group will get everything they want, but working together, we believe everyone will have their essential needs met.



To do this, we must earn support of diverse groups with economic, cultural and ideological interests:

- Wildlife/Fish
- Agricultural
- Tribal
- Household
- Business
- Recreation
- Government

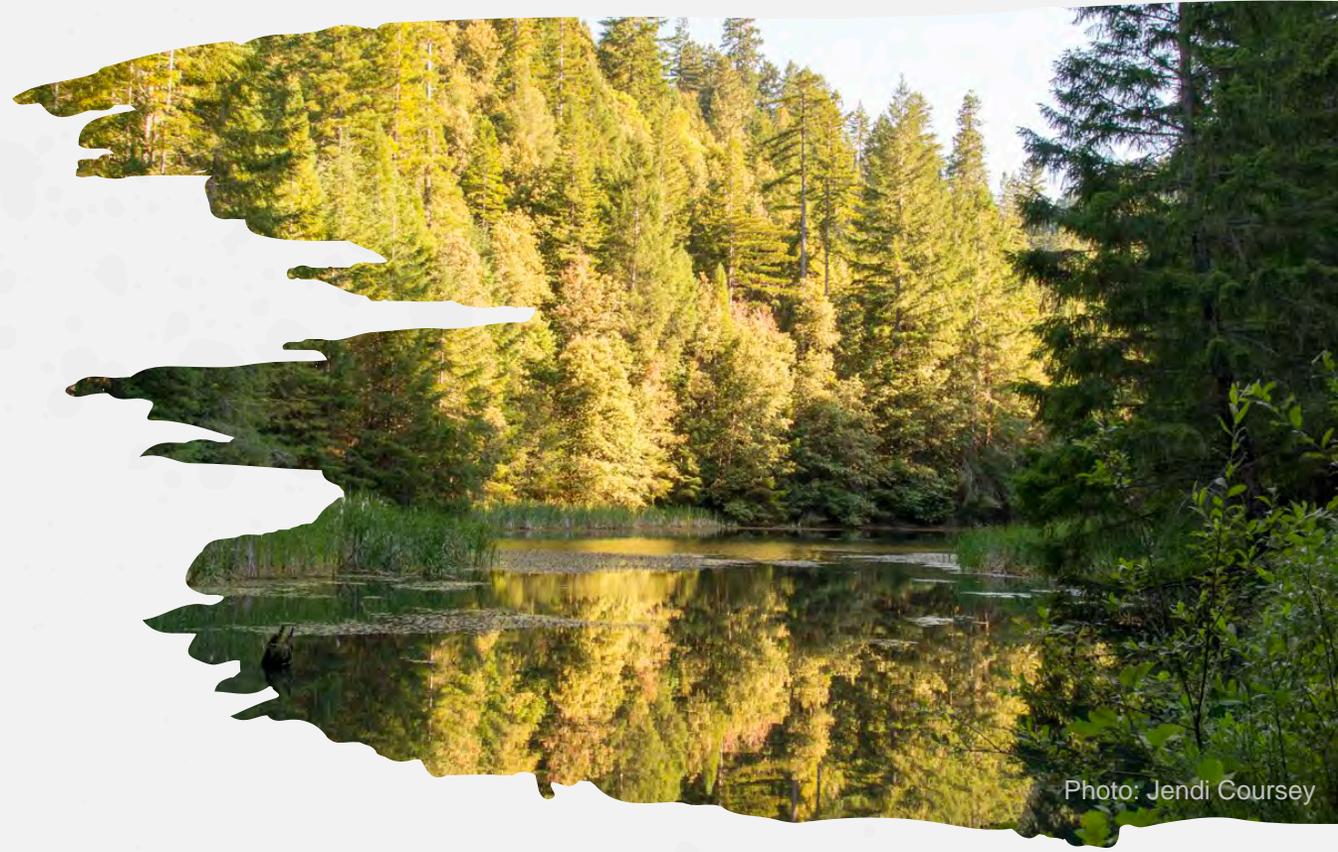
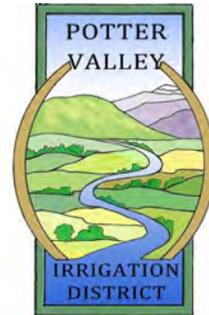


Photo: Jendi Coursey

## NOTICE OF INTENT PARTNERS:



The Mendocino County Inland Water and Power Commission (IWPC) is a Joint Powers Authority representing:



REDWOOD VALLEY  
COUNTY WATER DISTRICT



Currently, a coalition of local governments and private enterprises are working together to figure out how to safeguard our water supply and protect wildlife habitat for the future.

## ISSUES INCLUDE:

- Acquiring the license that allows the Potter Valley Project to continue
- Meeting regulatory requirements, including strict environmental safeguards
- Maintaining and upgrading the infrastructure

# GEOGRAPHY

## A Tale of Two Rivers: The Eel and the Russian

The Eel River Watershed includes 3,600 square miles of land and four other major tributaries besides the Upper Mainstem Eel where the Potter Valley Project is located.

The diversion links the Eel River Watershed to the Russian River Watershed via a mile-long tunnel.



# HOW WATER FLOWS

The Eel and Russian Rivers currently provide water for households, agriculture, wildlife and recreation in the following counties:

- Humboldt
- Mendocino
- Lake
- Sonoma
- Marin



Cape Horn Dam and Van Arsdale Reservoir



Lake Pillsbury



Scott Dam



Lake Mendocino

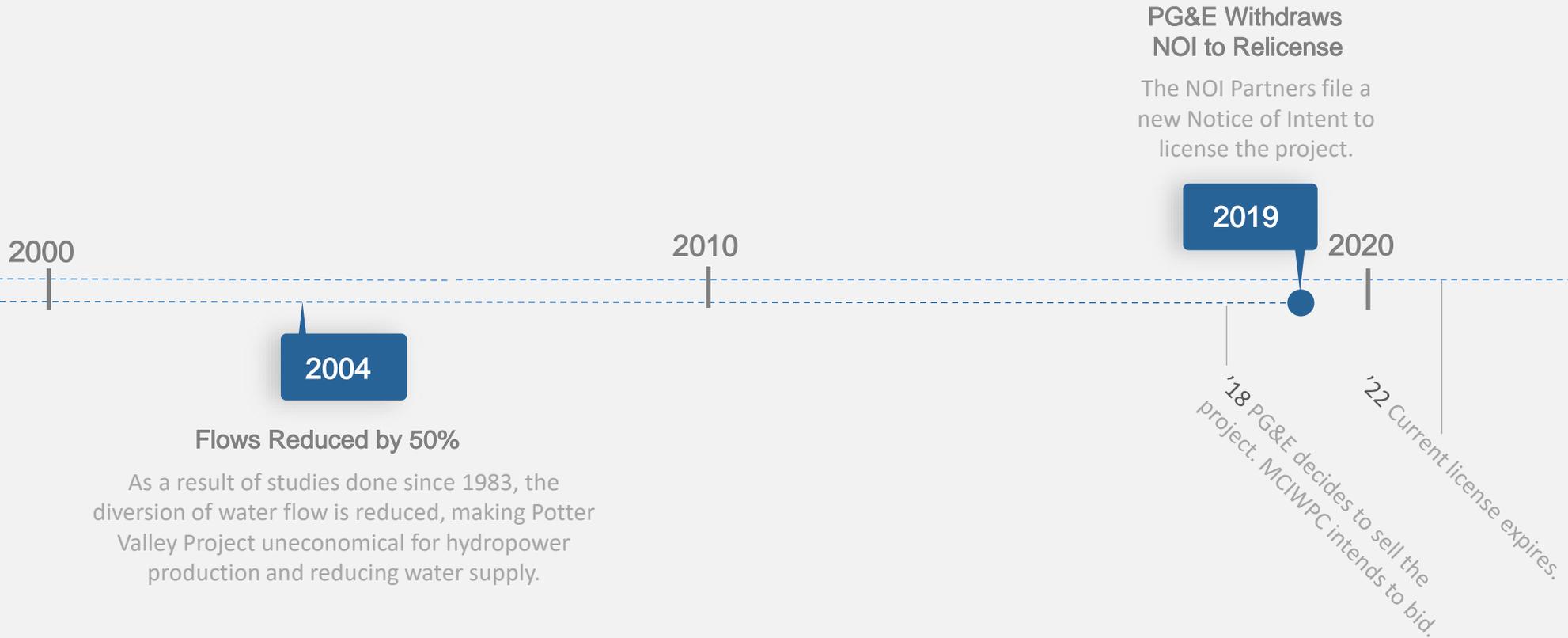




# A BRIEF HISTORY



# A BRIEF HISTORY



**Today:  
We Must  
Safeguard  
Our Local  
Water Supply**

A regional coalition is trying to create a viable plan for fish, farmers and community.



Photo: Jendi Coursey

## SO FAR

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In May, a planning agreement was signed by MCIWPC, CalTrout and Sonoma Water to prepare the Notice of Intent. Since then Humboldt County also joined the coalition and became one of the NOI partners. The Round Valley Indian Tribes have also recently voiced interest in joining the partnership.

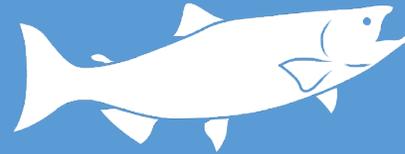
Note: The Mendocino County Inland Water and Power Commission (the MCIWPC) is a Joint Powers Authority representing the County of Mendocino, City of Ukiah, Redwood Valley County Water District, Potter Valley Irrigation District and the Mendocino County Russian River Flood Control and Water Conservation Improvement District.

On July 1, we submitted the Notice of Intent to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. Now the hard work begins. We need a feasibility study to determine how to:

- Maintain the Potter Valley Project diversion so it continues to provide the water supply that currently supports our quality of life and the economy of the Russian River watershed, and
- Continue to collaboratively manage our shared water resource to enhance the riverine ecology of both the Eel River and the Russian River.

# WHY THIS MATTERS

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## FISH

Fish habitats are impacted by water flows. Our goal is to maintain and improve conditions for threatened and endangered species in both the Eel and Russian River Watersheds.



## FARMS

Agriculture has evolved and thrived with the water supply from the Potter Valley Project, providing an economic foundation for local communities.



## COMMUNITY

The quality of life in our rural communities depends on having reliable year-round water and power for local households.

# FARMS

## ECONOMICS

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*“It is important to recognize that Lake Mendocino is considered the main source of water for agricultural use in the Study Area, as groundwater is not a direct substitute for water coming directly from the lake.”*

*Report by Dr. Robert Eyster, Economic Forensics and Analytics, Inc. 2015*

Farmers from the Eyster Study area (Redwood Valley through Hopland) who use water from Lake Mendocino annually generate or support:

- More than \$743 million of the county’s \$3.5 billion in revenue
- More than 5,000 of the 32,000 jobs
- Approximately \$16.1 million in local tax revenue

Estimated value of vine and tree crops:

- Potter Valley - \$30-35 million.
- Alexander Valley - \$180 million.

\*The Eyster report includes a multiplier, Potter Valley and Alexander Valley figures do not.



Photo: Jendi Coursey



# FARMS

## RURAL LANDSCAPE, SLOWER PACE OF LIFE

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Most of us love living in a non-urban environment. The farm economy helps create this.

# WILDLIFE/ECOLOGY

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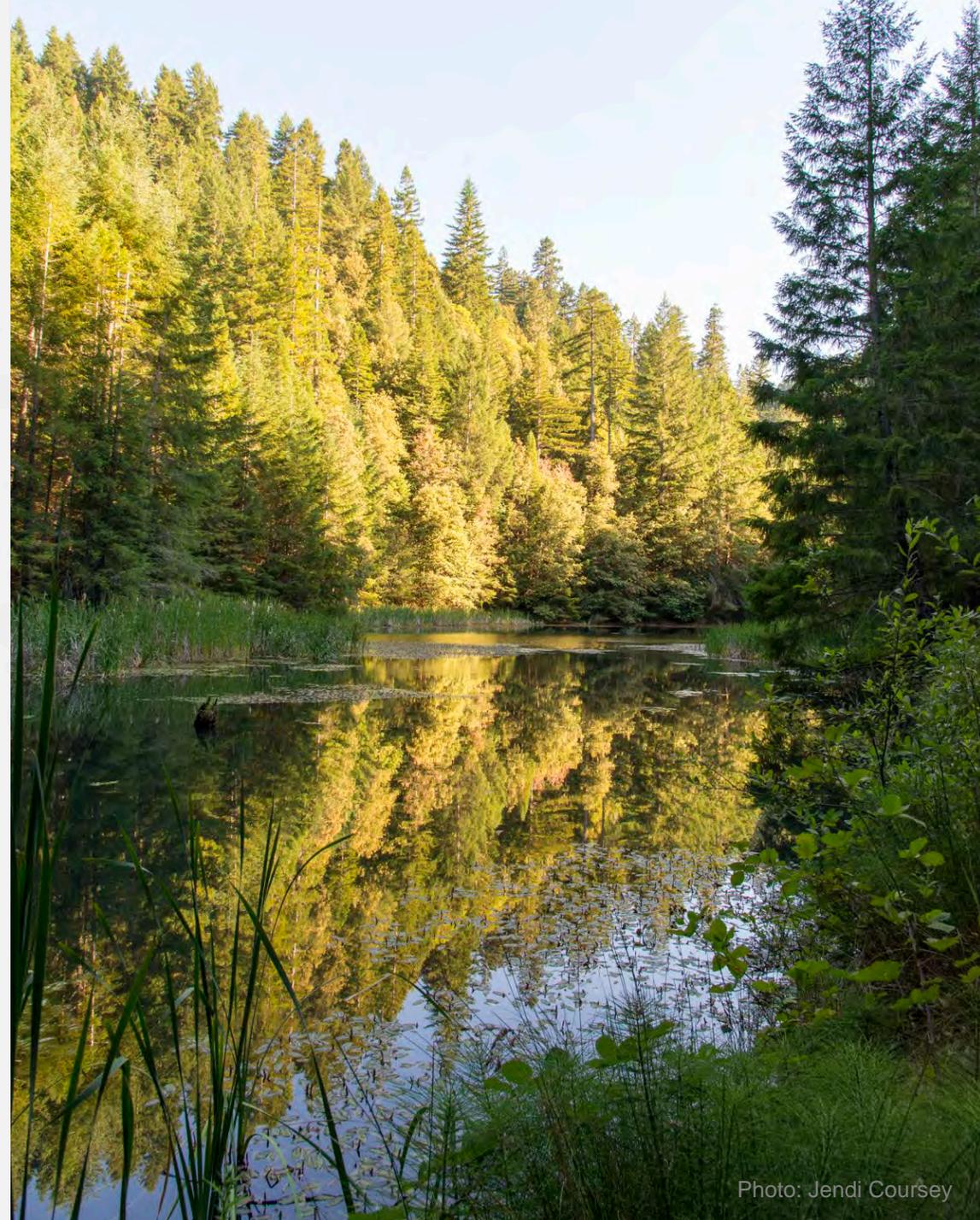
- Releases of water below Scott Dam and Van Arsdale Reservoir on the Eel River are based on Federal Energy Regulation Commission license requirements developed by fishery agencies specifically to mimic natural water flows and protect habitat for migrating, spawning and rearing of salmon and steelhead. (ESA, Section 7 Consultation)
- Millions of dollars have been spent and more will need to be budgeted to identify the best ways to improve wildlife habitat through restoration projects.

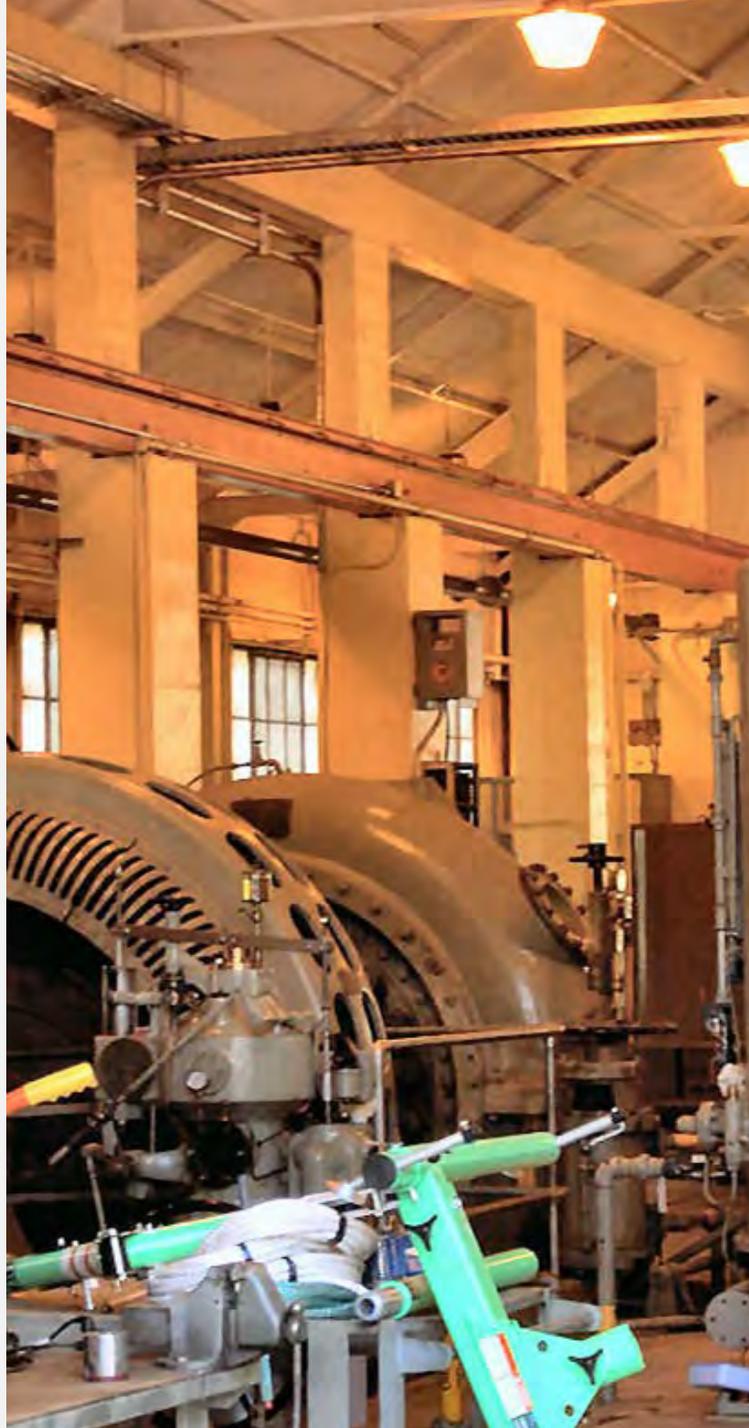


# WILDLIFE/ECOLOGY

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- Water flows in the East Branch of the Russian River in Potter Valley, below the Potter Valley Project, have fishery protection requirements imposed by California Dept of Fish & Wildlife.
- Some of the water stored in Lake Mendocino is dedicated to fishery migration flows that are required at specific times of the year in the Russian River below Lake Mendocino. (ESA, Section 7 Consultation)
- Fish are not the only wildlife to consider. Lake Pillsbury and Lake Mendocino support elk herds, many bird species, mammals such as bears and mountain lions, amphibians, reptiles, and so much more.





# COMMUNITY

## POWER FOR 11,000+ HOMES

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- Currently, the Potter Valley Powerhouse has the capacity to generate 9.2 megawatts.
- Three smaller, privately owned powerhouses downstream have the capacity to generate 1.18 megawatts.
- The diverted water from the project stored in Lake Mendocino is used again by the City of Ukiah to generate hydropower with a capacity of 3.5 megawatts.
- If a typical home uses 30 kWh/day, these powerhouses can generate enough power to supply about 11,000 homes.



# COMMUNITY

## WATER FOR 31,000 PEOPLE

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Lake Mendocino provides drinking water for more than 31,000 people in Redwood Valley, Calpella, Talmage, the Ukiah Valley, and Hopland.

# RECREATION

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Winter rainfall and snow melt stored in Lake Pillsbury provides water for summer and fall recreation in Lake Pillsbury, parts of the Eel River, Lake Mendocino and the Russian River from Coyote Valley Dam to Jenner.

Activities include camping, hiking, biking, fishing, boating, water-skiing, kayaking, canoeing, rafting, swimming, picnicking and more.



# FIRE SUPPRESSION

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Stored water and ag land have helped mitigate the effects of recent wildfires.

- Lake Pillsbury and Lake Mendocino
- Agricultural ponds
- Irrigated fields can serve as a buffer or fire break



Photo: Lake Pillsbury News Facebook Page



# WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF THE DAMS WENT AWAY?

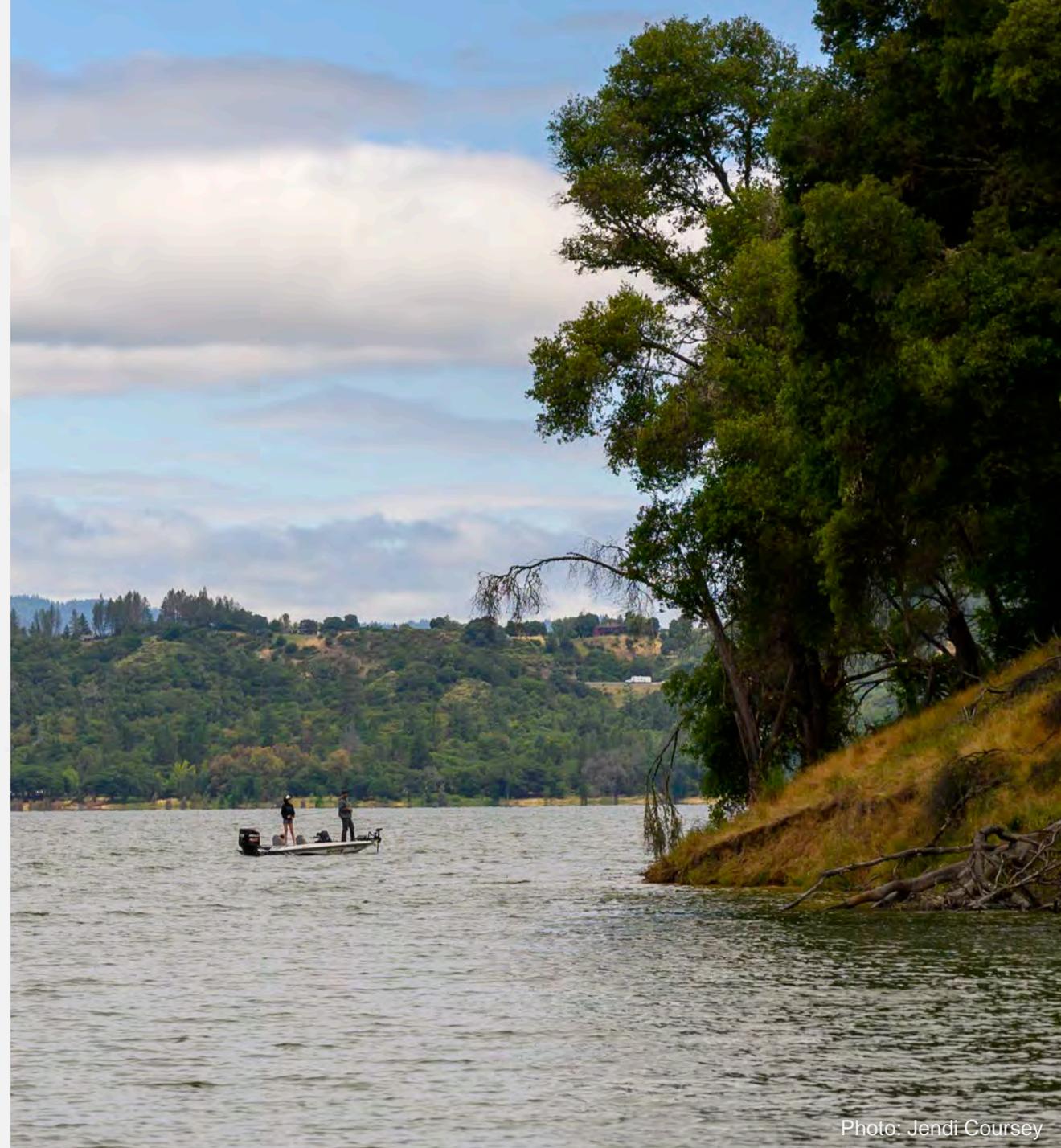
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- Without year-round water, downstream communities would face grave economic impacts.
- Stored water allows us to have a measure of control in both droughts and floods. No dams would mean less control.

# TRUTH

The people who use the water are responsible for protecting it.

Hundreds of thousands of people are dependent on this water supply. Part of the value of these watersheds include their natural beauty and the wildlife that live here. If we all pay our share, the burden will be manageable.





## FAQs

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- **How much will this cost?**  
It is hard to estimate the cost of maintaining a reliable, year-round water supply. The project as it is today may not be exactly like the project that is ultimately licensed. We know we are talking about millions of dollars.



## FAQs

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- What are our elected representatives doing about this?
  - Congressman Jared Huffman
  - Senator Mike McGuire
  - Assemblymember Jim Wood
  - County Boards of Supervisors
  - Other local elected officials



## FAQs

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- How are you working with groups with different priorities?
  - Wildlife/Fish
  - Agricultural
  - Tribal
  - Household
  - Business
  - Recreation
  - Government

## CALLS TO ACTION

- Please consider signing your name to the postcard to let state and local lawmakers know you support the Potter Valley Project. Message is “We support farms, fish and community.”
- Share your email with us if you’d like to receive periodic updates on our progress. The next step is the feasibility study.
- Follow us on social media and share our posts.
- Talk to your friends and neighbors about this. Talk to the farmers you know. We all need to get involved. The Potter Valley Project provides our community with water, food, and economic viability.
- Donate to the Farm Bureau to help us publicize and support this project.

