



AGENDA ITEM 7A

MEETING: July 17, 2024
TO: Humboldt LAFCo Commissioners
FROM: Krystle Heaney, Clerk/Analyst
SUBJECT: **Orick Community Services District Municipal Service Review and Sphere of Influence Update**
The Commission will continue the public hearing from May 23, 2024, and consider adopting Resolution No. 24-06, approving for the Orick Community Services District Municipal Services Review and Sphere of Influence Update.

BACKGROUND

The Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act directs Local Agency Formation Commissions (LAFCOs) to regularly prepare municipal service reviews (MSRs) in conjunction with establishing and updating each local agency's sphere of influence (SOI). The legislative intent of MSRs is to proactively assess the availability, capacity, and efficiency of local governmental services. MSRs may also lead LAFCOs to take other actions under their authority, such as forming, consolidating, or dissolving one or more local agencies in addition to any related sphere changes. As part of the Commission's work plan, staff has prepared a MSR/SOI Update for Orick Community Services District (CSD) which is located approximately 20 miles north of Trinidad along US Hwy 101.

DISCUSSION

Orick is a small community of approximately 350 with limited growth over the past decade. The Orick CSD currently provides water and fire protection services within its boundary and is planning a community wastewater system. The District has two service-specific spheres of influence (SOIs), one for "all services" that includes water, wastewater, and fire protection that is coterminous with the current District boundary and one for "fire-only services" that corresponds with the fire department's goodwill response area, that extends north, south and east beyond its boundary. No change to these service-specific SOIs is proposed at this time.

The lack of a community wastewater system for the community of Orick has been identified as one of the main hurdles preventing economic development and overall growth for the community. The current onsite wastewater treatment systems are unable to accommodate additional capacity and, in some cases, may pose an environmental threat to nearby groundwater and surface water resources. As such, the Orick CSD has been working diligently on development of a community wastewater system and is currently in the testing and design phase of the project.

Orick CSD is primarily funded by fees for water services and ad valorem property taxes. Fees for water services are used to support the maintenance and operation of the water

system while property taxes are mainly used to support fire services through the Orick Volunteer Fire Department.

Since the May Special Commission Meeting, staff has incorporated Commissioner Comments and additional information received from the District. Notable changes include:

- Consultation with Hank Seemann, Deputy-Director of Environmental Services for the Humboldt County Public Works Department who provided additional information on the current levee maintenance program, recent funding to complete a Levee Safety Plan, and upcoming preparation of a feasibility study to consider alternatives for modifying the lower portion of the Flood Control Project for multiple benefits.
- Inclusion the District's underflow water rights for Redwood Creek.
- Updated financial information including the District's FY22 and FY23 audits.

RECOMMENDATION

This item has been agendized for consideration as part of a noticed public hearing that was continued from May 23, 2024. It is recommended that the Commission consider adopting Resolution 24-06, approving the Orick CSD MSR/SOI Update and thereby reaffirming the "All Services SOI" that is coterminous with the current District boundary and the "Fire-Only Services SOI" that corresponds with the fire department's expanded goodwill response area.

Procedures for Consideration:

The following procedures are recommended with respect to the Commission's consideration of this item:

- 1) Receive verbal report from staff;
- 2) Continue the public hearing and invite testimony (mandatory); and
- 3) Discuss the item and consider taking action.

Attachments

Attachment A: Revised Final Draft Orick Community Services District Municipal Service Review and Sphere of Influence Update

Attachment B: Draft Resolution 24-06

Orick Community Services District Municipal Services Review and Sphere of Influence Update



Revised Final Draft

July 2024



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Acknowledgements:

LAFCo would like to thank the staff and board members of the Orick Community Services District for their assistance during the preparation of this Municipal Services Review.

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1.0 MSR/SOI BACKGROUND

1.1 Role and Responsibility of LAFCo

Local Agency Formation Commissions (LAFCos) are independent regulatory commissions that were established by the State legislature in 1963 to encourage the orderly growth and development of local governmental agencies including cities and special districts. Today, there is a LAFCo in each of California's 58 counties. Humboldt LAFCo is a seven-member commission comprised of two members of the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors, two City Council members, two Special District representatives, and one Public Member-At-Large. The Commission also includes one alternate member for each represented category.

LAFCo is responsible for implementing the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 ("CKH Act") (California Government Code Section 56000 et seq.) for purposes of facilitating changes in local governmental structure and boundaries that fosters orderly growth and development, promotes the efficient delivery of services, and encourages the preservation of open space and agricultural lands. Some of LAFCo's duties include regulating jurisdictional boundary changes and the extension of municipal services. This includes city and special district annexations, incorporations/formations, consolidations, and other changes of organization. LAFCo seeks to be proactive in raising awareness and building partnerships to accomplish this through its special studies, programs, and actions.

The CKH Act outlines requirements for preparing Municipal Service Reviews (MSRs) for periodic Sphere of Influence (SOI) updates. MSRs and SOIs are tools created to empower LAFCo to satisfy its legislative charge of "discouraging urban sprawl, preserving open space and prime agricultural lands, efficiently providing government services, and encouraging the orderly formation and development of local agencies based upon local conditions and circumstances" (§56301). CKH Act Section 56301 further establishes that "one of the objects of the commission is to make studies and to obtain and furnish information which will contribute to the logical and reasonable development of local agencies in each county and to shape the development of local agencies so as to advantageously provide for the present and future needs of each county and its communities." SOIs therefore guide both the near-term and long-term physical and economic growth and development of local agencies, and MSRs provide the relevant data to inform LAFCo's SOI determinations.

1.2 Purpose of Municipal Service Reviews

As described above, MSRs are designed to equip LAFCo with relevant information and data necessary for the Commission to make informed decisions on SOIs. The CKH Act, however, gives LAFCo broad discretion in deciding how to conduct MSRs, including geographic focus, scope of study, and the identification of alternatives for improving the efficiency, cost-effectiveness, accountability, and reliability of public services. The purpose of a MSR in general is to provide a comprehensive inventory and analysis of the services provided by local municipalities, service areas, and special districts. A MSR evaluates the structure and operation of the local municipalities, service areas, and special districts and discusses possible areas for improvement and coordination. While LAFCos have no direct regulatory authority over cities and special

districts, MSRs provide information concerning the governance structures and efficiencies of service providers – and may also serve as the basis for subsequent LAFCo decisions. The MSR is intended to provide information and analysis to support a sphere of influence update. A written statement of the study's determinations must be made in the following areas:

- (1) Growth and population projections for the affected area
- (2) Location and characteristics of any disadvantaged unincorporated communities within or continuous to the sphere of influence
- (3) Present and planned capacity of public facilities, adequacy of public services, and infrastructure needs or deficiencies
- (4) Financial ability of the agency to provide services
- (5) Status of and opportunities for shared facilities
- (6) Accountability for community service needs, including governmental structure and operational efficiencies
- (7) Any other matter related to effective or efficient service delivery, as required by Commission policy

This MSR is organized according to these determinations listed above. Information regarding each of the above issue areas is provided in this document.

1.3 Purpose of Spheres of Influence

In 1972, LAFCOs were given the power to establish SOIs for all local agencies under their jurisdiction. As defined by the CKH Act, "'sphere of influence' means a plan for the probable physical boundaries and service area of a local agency, as determined by the commission" (§56076). All boundary changes, such as annexations, must be consistent with an agency's sphere of influence with limited exceptions.

Pursuant to Humboldt LAFCo policy, a MSR is conducted prior to or in conjunction with its mandate to review and update each local agency's sphere of influence every five years or as necessary. The municipal service review process is intended to inform the Commission as to the availability, capacity, and efficiency of local governmental services prior to making sphere of influence determinations.

LAFCo is required to make five written determinations when establishing, amending, or updating an SOI for any local agency that address the following (§56425(c)):

- (1) The present and planned land uses in the area, including agricultural and open space lands.
- (2) The present and probable need for public facilities and services in the area.
- (3) The present capacity of public facilities and adequacy of public services that the agency provides or is authorized to provide.
- (4) The existence of any social or economic communities of interest in the area if the Commission determines that they are relevant to the agency.

- (5) For an update of an SOI of a city or special district that provides public facilities or services related to sewers, municipal and industrial water, or structural fire protection, the present and probable need for those public facilities and services of any disadvantaged unincorporated communities within the existing sphere of influence.

Service reviews may also contain recommendations for sphere of influence or government structure changes needed to implement positive service changes. Where more detailed analysis of service options is necessary, service reviews may contain recommendations for special studies where there is the potential to reduce service gaps and improve service levels.

1.4 Community Services District Principal Act

The CSD principal act is the Community Services District Law (Government Code §61000, et seq.) which authorizes CSDs to provide up to 31 types of governmental services within their boundaries. Orick CSD is authorized to provide water, wastewater, and fire protection services. Other services, facilities, functions or powers enumerated in the District's principal act but not identified in the formation resolution are "latent," meaning that they are authorized by the principal act under which the District is formed but are not being exercised. Latent powers and services activation require LAFCo authorization as indicated in Government Code §25213.5.

1.5 Disadvantaged Unincorporated Communities

Senate Bill (SB) 244 (Chapter 513, Statutes of 2011) made changes to the CKH Act related to "disadvantaged unincorporated communities," (DUCs) including the addition of SOI determination number (5) listed above. Humboldt LAFCo has adopted DUC policy, which identifies 31 inhabited unincorporated "legacy" communities, including Orick, for purposes of implementing SB 244. These legacy communities were defined as part of the Humboldt County 2014 Housing Element for areas not located within the sphere of influence of a city. DUCs are recognized as social and economic communities of interest for purposes of recommending SOI determinations pursuant to Section 56425(c).

DUCs are assessed for three primary services: water, wastewater, and fire/emergency response. Orick CSD currently provides water and fire services and is planning the development of a wastewater system for the community. Should any nearby areas be proposed for annexation, careful consideration should be given to the boundary location in order to ensure potentially disadvantaged areas are receiving vital services.

2.0 ORICK COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT BACKGROUND

2.1 Agency Overview

Orick Community Service District (Orick CSD or District) is an independent special district located in the northwestern corner of Humboldt County along Highway 101 near the mouth of Redwood Creek and surrounded by Redwood National and State Parks. Nearby is Prairie Creek Redwoods State Park and Lady Bird Johnson Grove. Orick CSD is authorized to provide water, wastewater, and fire protection services. The District is currently involved with wastewater improvement planning efforts as it currently does not have wastewater infrastructure in place. The town of Orick is located roughly in the center of the Yurok Tribe's ancestral territory on the coast. Orick is named after a traditional village called Owr-rekw.

Table 1: Orick CSD Contact Information

Contacts	Ron Barlow, Board Chair Trevor Avram, Operator/Manager Barbara Mitchell, Bookkeeper
E-mail	orickcsd@gmail.com
Address	101 Swan Road / PO Box 224 Orick, CA 95555
Phone	(707) 488-5741
Website	www.orickcsd.org

2.2 Formation and Development

Orick CSD was declared formed on December 12, 1955, by the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors (Resolution No. 883), after a successful special election was held on December 6, 1955. The District was established pursuant to the Community Services District Law (California Government Code Section 61000 et seq.) for the purpose of providing fire protection services. On August 14, 1974, the District received LAFCo approval for activation of the District's water and wastewater powers, which was subsequently confirmed by voters at an election held on November 5, 1974. The District then secured a Davis-Grunsky Loan to construct a community water system and in February 1978, the Orick CSD began supplying potable water to the community for residential, commercial, and agricultural users, as well as fire protection purposes. In January 1987, the water main was extended to the Redwood National Park Information Center/South Operations Center, which gave the opportunity for other CSD residents to obtain community water¹.

With the passage of Senate Bill 135 (Kehoe) in 2005², any services that a district was not providing prior to January 1, 2006, became a "latent power," requiring future LAFCo approval for activation. At that time, Orick CSD was providing water services, but not wastewater services and did not work with the County/LAFCo to retain wastewater services as an active power. Therefore, even though there was prior activation, the District's wastewater powers became "latent." In March 2011, Orick CSD applied to LAFCo to (re)activate its wastewater powers due

¹ Humboldt LAFCo, Orick CSD Final Sphere of Influence Report, September 1989.

² SB 135 (Kehoe) revised Community Services District Law which took effect on January 1, 2006.

to documented health and safety concerns related to failing on-site septic systems that threaten water quality of both groundwater and Redwood Creek which runs through Orick. LAFCo approved the activation of wastewater powers on May 18, 2011 (Resolution No. 11-02), although it was later determined by the District that a centralized treatment system would be infeasible due to high capital and operational costs, system complexity, large land needs, and regulatory challenges. Since then, Orick CSD has continued to be involved with wastewater improvement planning efforts and has received funding for planning and design ([see Section 3.3 - Wastewater Powers](#)). As such, the District's current list of active powers includes water, wastewater, and fire protection services.

Activation of Recreation Powers

The District has expressed interest in providing recreational opportunities as part of their land acquisition for the proposed wastewater project. Since Orick CSD does not currently provide this type of service, they would need to activate park and recreation powers through LAFCo in accordance with Government Code Section 61100 and 61106. In accordance with Government Code Section 56824.10, 56824.12, and 56824.14, proceedings for new services may only be initiated by a resolution of application by the legislative body of the special district.

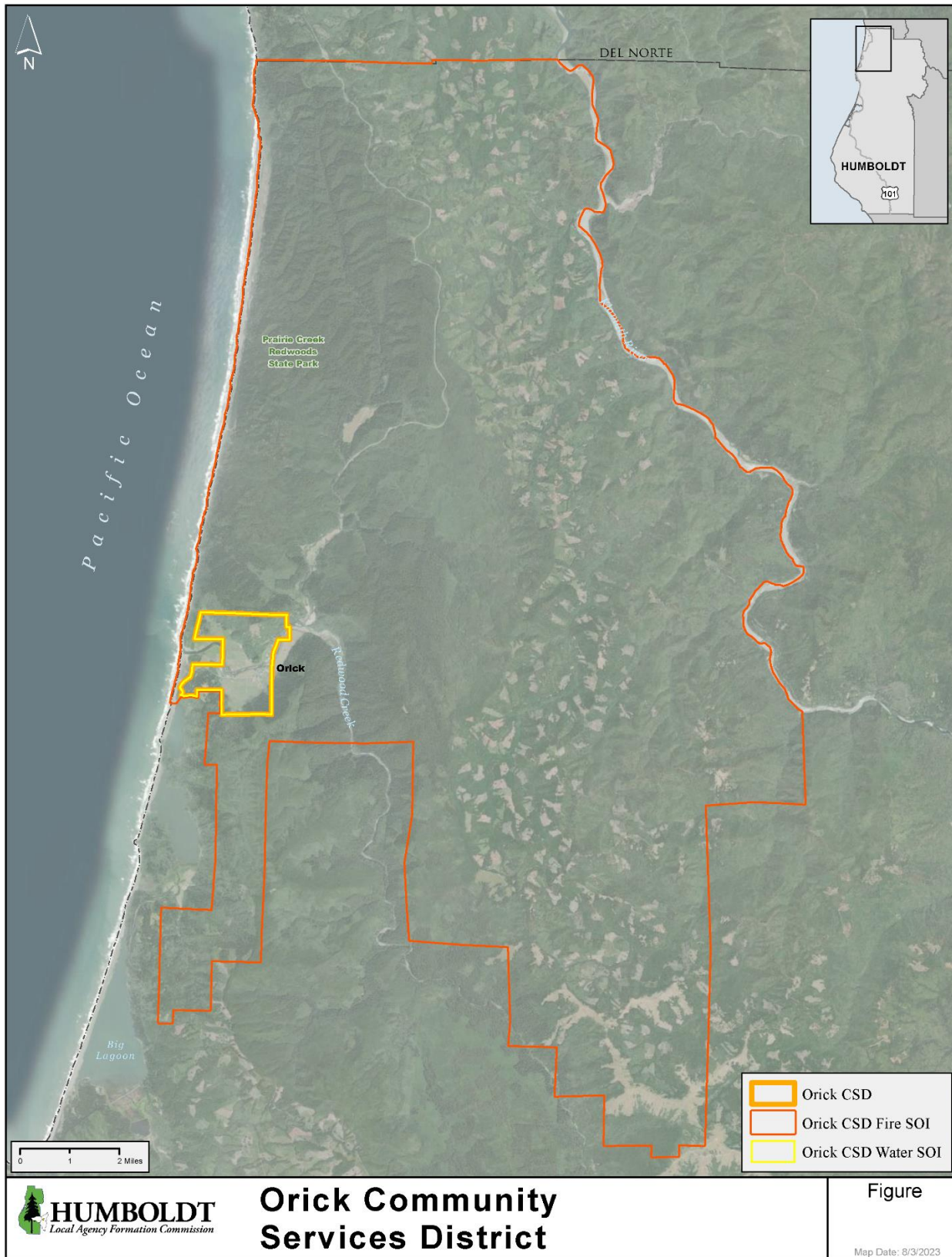
A LAFCo application for activation of new powers would include a completed application form, resolution of application, plan for services, map and geographic description, and application deposit as determined by the current fee schedule. The plan for services will need to clearly state the type of services to be provided and how those services are to be funded. Other requirements for the plan for services are listed in Government Code Section 56653. LAFCo shall not approve a proposal for the establishment of new or different services unless the Commission determines that the District will have sufficient revenues to carry out the proposed service or conditions its approval on the concurrent approval of sufficient revenue sources.

2.3 Boundary and Sphere of Influence

The jurisdictional boundary of Orick CSD is approximately 2.3 square miles (Figure 1). The District is situated on the Pacific coastline and is relatively isolated from other north coast communities. The District resides within the Orick valley and contains the coastal floodplain of Redwood Creek, a federally listed water body under 303(d) of the Clean Water Act for sediment and water temperature impairment³. In the lower reach of Redwood Creek, levees provide flood control for the Orick community, but also impact the biological and physical functions of the estuary. Orick is a rural community surrounded by Redwood National and State Parks, private forests, and agricultural lands. Due to its proximity to the ocean, a portion of the District's jurisdictional boundary is within the Coastal Zone as defined by the California Coastal Commission.

³
https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/water_issues/programs/tmdls/redwood_creek/#:~:text=Redwood%20Creek%20TMDL,EPA%20on%20December%2030%2C%201998.

Figure 1: Orick CSD Boundary and SOIs



Since the District's formation, there have been no annexations or detachments that would otherwise change the District's boundary. The District has two service-specific spheres of influence (SOIs), one for "all services" that includes water, wastewater, and fire protection that is coterminous with the current District boundary and one for "fire-only services" that corresponds with the fire department's goodwill response area, that extends north, south and east beyond its boundary as discussed further below.

The Redwood National Park Visitor Center (APN 520-251-013) and the Orick solid waste container site (APN 520-151-001) are located outside the District boundary and receive water services from the District. There are no other parcels located outside the District boundary that currently receive water services or are currently planned to receive wastewater services.

Fire Service SOI

Orick CSD has an extended goodwill response area for fire services. The District responds to this area on a "goodwill" basis with no defined responsibility or funding because, other than the seasonally staffed California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) station in Elk Camp on Bald Hills Road, there is no other available fire protection service provider. The District's Fire Services SOI includes this out of district goodwill response area of approximately 121.5 square miles, with a total response area of 123.8 square miles. It follows the coast and extends north to the county border, east to the Klamath River, and south along Highway 101 to Big Lagoon. This extensive area is largely forested and contains the Redwood National and State Park.

Wastewater Service Area

A specific wastewater service area was designated for Orick CSD as part of the wastewater powers activation process in 2011. LAFCo Resolution 11-02 references a wastewater service area (see Figure 2) and includes the following condition:

Prior to any future OCSD extension of wastewater infrastructure and/or wastewater service to or through any lands designated as Agriculture, which are located outside of the current Wastewater System Project Location, as identified in [Figure 2], would first require LAFCo approval.

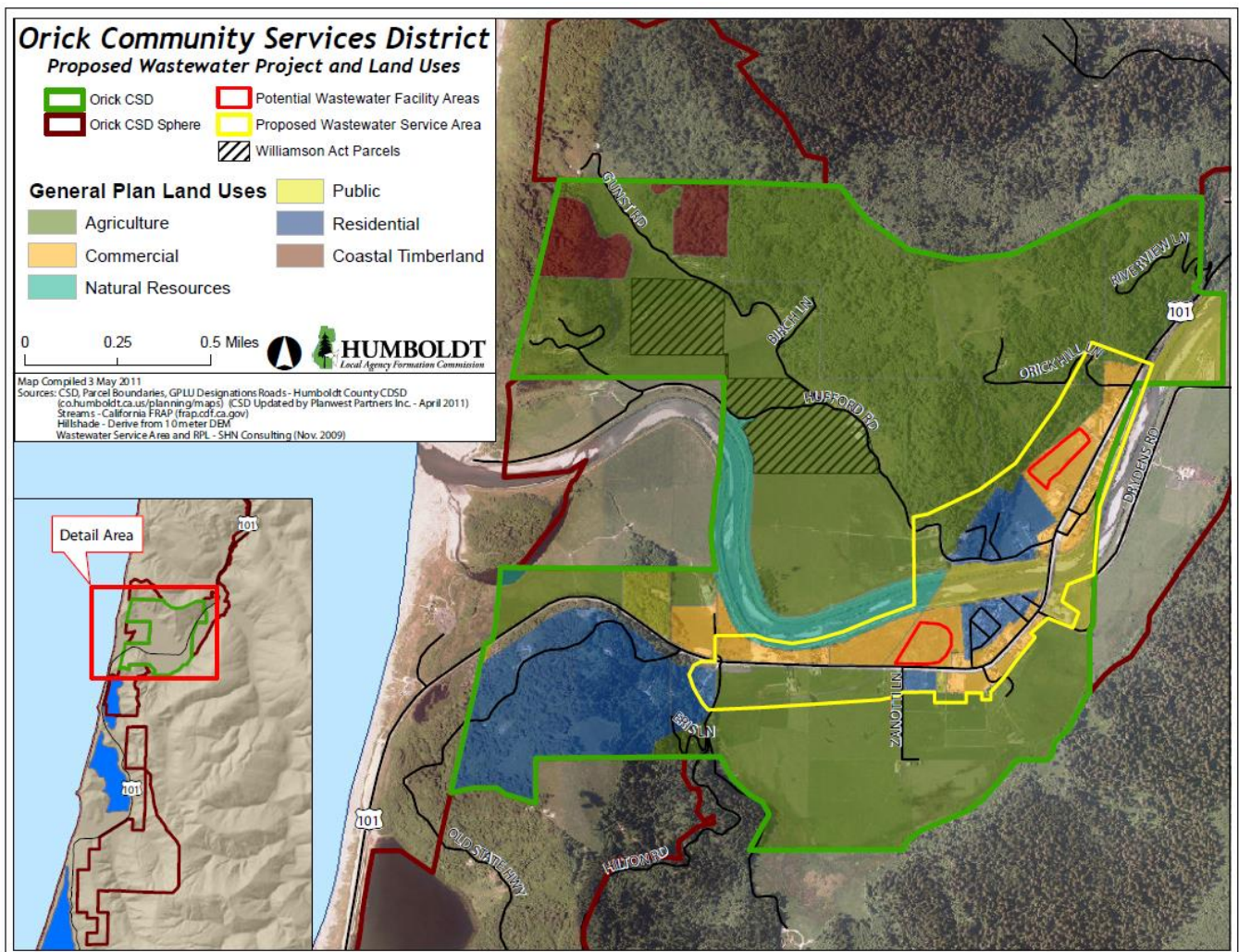
Wastewater improvement planning efforts by the Orick CSD have continued since the 2011 powers activation. However, a preferred wastewater system design has not been decided. Once the design for the project has been finalized and service area boundaries confirmed, it may be necessary for the District to request an amendment or revision of the wastewater service area designated in LAFCo Resolution 11-02.

It is important to note that if any wastewater connections are proposed outside of the urban limit line established by the North Coast Area Plan (NCAP), an amendment to the NCAP may be necessary consistent with the service extension policies and policies related to the Urban Limits of the NCAP and the Inland Urban Development Area/Urban Expansion Area policies of the Humboldt County General Plan. Currently, the urban limit line parallels the north side of Highway 101 within the Orick CSD service area. Current language in the NCAP (Section 3.32.A.1) does make an exception for water service outside of the urban limit line, as follows:

- a. Extension of the Orick Community Services District water system outside the urban limit line is permitted to service lands planned for residential use, the Redwood National Park visitor center, the Orick solid waste container site..., and lands planned for agriculture.
- b. Extension of water service shall not cause any financial encumbrance, other than fees for services provided to any rural lands.
- c. No new connection may be made outside these areas without further amendment to this plan.

An application to amend the NCAP would be approved by the County and must be certified by the California Coastal Commission to take effect, which may take a year or more. Hence, even if construction of the project begins earlier, connection of these parcels would have to await approval of the amendment.

Figure 2: Orick CSD 2011 Wastewater Service Area



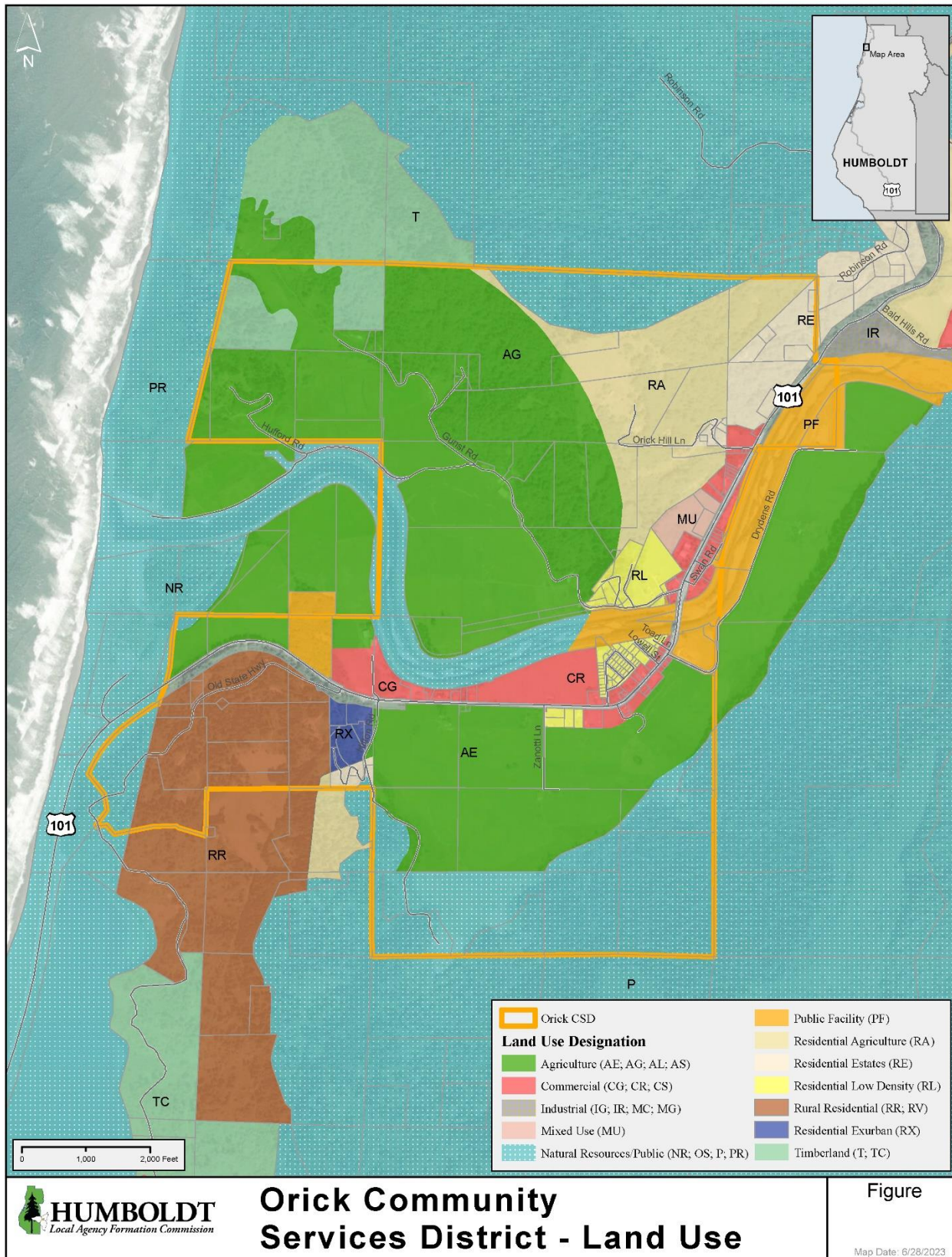
2.4 Land Use and Zoning

Land uses within the District and the Out of District Response Area are subject to the Humboldt County General Plan, and the policies of the Orick Community Plan contained in Appendix C, Community Area Plans Extract, the North Coast Area Plan of the Humboldt County Local Coastal Program, and County Zoning Regulations (Humboldt County Code Title III, Division 1). The District's boundaries and General Plan land use designations are shown in Figure 3.

Within the District, the largest General Plan land use designations are Agricultural Exclusive (AE 60), indicating 60-acre minimum lot sizes for agriculture, and Residential Agriculture with varying densities (RA 40-160 and RA 5-20), which combine residential living with agricultural use. Rural Residential (RR) areas also occupy a significant portion, providing lower density housing typically associated with larger lot sizes. The central hub of Orick along Highway 101 is characterized by a mix of Commercial Retail (CR), General Commercial (CG), Residential Low Density (RL) and Mixed Use (MU), reflecting the area's commercial and residential activity. The Orick CSD office and the eastern portion of Redwood Creek are designated Public Facility (PF). The western portion of Redwood Creek to the Pacific Ocean is designated as Natural Resources (NR). Surrounding the District, the predominant land uses to the northeast and southwest is Public (P) which includes land within Prairie Creek Redwoods State Park and Redwood National and State Parks.

Under Humboldt County Zoning Regulations, zoning within the District is categorized to support various land uses. Agricultural Exclusive zones, marked as AE-20/E and AE-60/E, indicate areas prioritized for agricultural activities with environmental considerations. Residential Agriculture zones, RA-5-M/E and RA-5-20/M/E, blend residential and agricultural uses. The District's commercial needs are met by the Commercial Retail (CR) and Commercial Highway (CH-D) designations along the Highway 101 corridor, with General Commercial (CG) areas accommodating a broader range of businesses. Residential Low Density zones are indicated by R-1-DT, providing lower-density housing options. Surrounding the District, the zoning designations include Public Resource Areas with environmental designations (PR/A,E,D,B) along the western portion, reflecting a strong emphasis on conservation and resource management. Timber Production Zone (TPZ) designations to the North and South designate regions allocated for forestry and related activities. Lastly, the Unclassified ('U') designation is applied to Redwood National Park to the south and east, indicating that that these public lands are not precisely zoned.

Figure 3: Orick CSD Land Uses



2.5 Tribal Lands

The community of Orick is located within the ancestral tribal lands of the Yurok Tribe, a sovereign and federally recognized Tribe with over 6,400 members and the largest native nation in California.⁴ The Tolowa Dee-ni Nation, a sovereign and federally recognized Tribe with a present membership of 1,900⁵ also had a historical presence in the area. According to the 2020 American Community Survey conducted by the US Census Bureau, American Indian and Alaska Native (non-Hispanic) individuals made up approximately 6.65% of the population in the Orick area.

The name Orick is derived from the Yurok word "Owr-rekw" or "O'rekw," which translates to "mouth of the river". The name Orick holds historical significance, highlighting its geographical location at the mouth of Redwood Creek. The Yurok Tribe's people, historically known as the Pohlik-la, Ner-er-er, Petch-ik-lah and Klamath River Indians, inhabited the region for millennia, maintaining a strong connection to the land and the neighboring Klamath River watershed. Their ancestral territory encompasses a vast area along the northwest California coast, including the Orick area, which provided an extreme abundance of ocean and river resources, wild game and plant foods, all of which were carefully managed for maximum sustainability.⁶

In 2023, the Yurok Economic Development Corporation (YEDC), an economic development branch of the Yurok Tribe, secured a \$6 million grant from the US Economic Development Agency to build a brand-new fuel mart, laundromat, and tribal government offices within Orick. Located on the footprint of the existing Shoreline Market, which was purchased by YEDC in 2020, this economic development project will involve the construction of a two-story building. A minimart will occupy the first floor of the partially solar-powered facility. A laundromat will also be on the ground level but will have a separate entryway. The second story will contain tribal offices and two conference rooms. The adjacent fuel mart will offer eight unleaded and high-flow diesel fuel pumps as well as multiple electric vehicle charging stations.

2.6 Growth and Population

Orick CSD is located within the Orick Census Designated Place (CDP). According to the 2020 U.S. Census, the Orick CDP had a population of 346 (compared to 357 in 2010), representing a decrease of 11 individuals or a decline of approximately 3.1% over the decade. Looking at historical population changes for the area, the population of the Orick valley has been declining for many years⁷. The town of Orick reached a population of over two thousand at the peak of commercial logging operations in the 1960's. Employment in the north coast timber industry began to decline in the mid-1960's and the Orick area suffered more of a decline than most of Humboldt County. The small sawmills located near the logging operations were gradually replaced by larger, more automated mills concentrated in Eureka and Arcata. The establishment of Redwood National Park in 1968 and its expansion in 1978 removed most of the commercial timberlands in the immediate vicinity of Orick and ended the timber industry's role as the major source of employment in the valley. To date, no significant replacement of those

⁴ https://democracyforward.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Yurok-Tribe-Comment-CFR-131_-2023.3.6_signed.pdf

⁵ <https://www.tolowa-nsn.gov/234/DEMOGRAPHICS>

⁶ <https://www.yuroktribe.org/our-history>

⁷ Orick Community Plan, 1985.

<http://www.humboldt.gov/DocumentCenter/Home/View/4366>

employment opportunities has occurred, and people have gradually left the valley seeking better job prospects.

The total population of Humboldt County is projected by the State of California to decline for the foreseeable future (California Department of Finance. Demographic Research Unit. Report P-2A: Total Population Projections, California Counties, 2020-2060 (Baseline 2019 Population Projections; Vintage 2023 Release). Sacramento: California. July 2023). However, these are countywide projections and do not reflect population changes that may occur within individual cities or communities within the County. For purposes of this MSR, the future population of Orick can be conservatively estimated by utilizing projected population trends for rural unincorporated areas from the Humboldt County 2017 General Plan. If the growth rate from the General Plan is applied to Orick's 2020 population of 346, the population in the area could reach 360 in 2030⁸.

As mentioned previously, water quality issues from failing septic systems in Orick limit economic opportunities in the community and consequently also inhibits growth. Orick qualifies as a disadvantaged unincorporated community (as discussed below) and is transitioning from a resource-based to a service-based economy. The lack of a modern-day wastewater treatment facility hinders this transition which relies on improved recreational opportunities, sustainable businesses, and planned residential and commercial growth⁹.

2.7 Disadvantaged Unincorporated Communities

LAFCo is required to evaluate disadvantaged unincorporated communities (DUCs) as part of this municipal service review, including the location and characteristics of any such communities. DUCs are inhabited territories (containing 12 or more registered voters) where the annual median household income (MHI) is less than 80 percent of the statewide annual median household income. The Department of Water Resources (DWR) also identifies Severely Disadvantaged Communities (SDAC) which are defined as below 60% of the statewide MHI¹⁰. The estimated 2021 MHI for Orick is \$36,042¹¹ which is 43% of the 2021 California MHI of \$84,097¹². This qualifies the District as a SDAC and a DUC for purposes of LAFCo.

In 2005, the County passed a resolution naming Orick as a blighted community. In total, there were seven (7) community areas within Humboldt County that received this designation including portions of the unincorporated communities of Willow Creek, Alton, Glendale, Fields Landing, Manila, Samoa/Fairhaven, and Orick. These areas had a variety of blight conditions resulting in deteriorated, substandard, obsolete, or vacant buildings and other properties that were either not developed because of certain blight conditions or were necessary for inclusion as a blighted area to allow for the effective planning and redevelopment of the area. Their

⁸ <https://humboldt.gov/DocumentCenter/View/61984/Humboldt-County-General-Plan-complete-document-PDF>

⁹ Redwood Creek Integrated Watershed Strategy (2006). <http://npshistory.com/publications/redw/redwood-creek-iws.pdf>

¹⁰ <https://norcalwater.org/efficient-water-management/efficient-water-management-regional-sustainability/disadvantaged-communities/#:~:text=A%20Severely%20Disadvantaged%20Community%20is,no%20more%20than%2010%2C000%20persons.>

¹¹ United States Census Bureau. 2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Office. Web. 6 June 2023.

¹² https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/drinking_water/services/funding/documents/srf/mhi.pdf.

designation as a blighted community provides greater access to funding for redevelopment and infrastructure projects¹³.

Orick is also identified as an unincorporated legacy community (ULC) within the Humboldt County Housing Element¹⁴. A legacy community is defined as a place that meets the following criteria:

- Contains 10 or more dwelling units in close proximity to one another;
- Is either within a city Sphere of Influence (SOI), is an island within a city boundary, or is geographically isolated and has existed for more than 50 years; and
- Has a median household income that is 80 percent or less than the statewide median household income.

As noted previously, DUCs are assessed for three primary services: water, wastewater, and fire/emergency response. Orick CSD provides water and fire protection services to the community and is currently involved with wastewater infrastructure planning efforts. These services will be discussed in detail under Section 3.3 – Wastewater Services.

2.8 Hazards

Orick CSD participated in and met the participation requirements to be covered by the Humboldt County Operational Area Hazard Mitigation Plan, 2020¹⁵ (LHMP). The LHMP is a plan to identify and profile hazard conditions, analyze risk to people and facilities, and develop mitigation actions to reduce or eliminate hazard risks in Humboldt County and in incorporated jurisdictions within the County. Jurisdictions with FEMA-approved and formally adopted mitigation plans are eligible to apply for funding under FEMA's hazard mitigation assistance programs, including Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, Pre-Disaster Mitigation and Flood Mitigation Assistance grant programs. The LHMP incorporates a process where hazards are identified and profiled, the people and facilities at risk are analyzed, and mitigation actions are developed to reduce or eliminate hazard risk. The implementation of these mitigation actions, which include both short and long-term strategies, involves planning, policy changes, programs, projects, and other activities. References to specific actions by the Orick CSD to reduce hazards, which primarily relate to flooding, are contained in LHMP, Volume 2: Planning Partner Annexes.

Earthquakes

Orick CSD is situated in an area with a documented history of earthquakes and resulting tsunamis. The local Karuk and Tolowa peoples recount these seismic events through oral traditions, highlighting the long-standing presence of seismic activity in the region¹⁶.

Humboldt County, including the Orick area, is particularly susceptible to earthquakes due to its location on the southern end of the Cascadia Subduction Zone. This subduction zone spans from Cape Mendocino in California to Vancouver Island in Canada. The Cascadia Subduction

¹³ Humboldt County Redevelopment Agency, Fire-year Humboldt County Redevelopment Agency Implementation Plan, 2006.

¹⁴ Humboldt County (2014) Humboldt County Housing Element, Appendix G. "Detail of Infrastructure and Service Needs of Legacy Communities". Approved May 13, 2014.

¹⁵ Humboldt County Operational Area Hazard Mitigation Plan, 2020. <https://humboldt.gov/3011/County-Emergency-Plans>

¹⁶ <http://npshistory.com/publications/redw/native-stories-earthquakes-tsunamis.pdf>

Zone involves the interaction of three tectonic plates including the Gorda Plate and Juan De Fuca Plate which are both subducting beneath the North American Plate. Experts believe that the Cascadia Subduction Zone has the potential to generate a magnitude 9.0 earthquake, known as a "great Cascadia quake." The most recent event of this magnitude occurred on January 26th, 1700. Furthermore, geological evidence suggests that over the past 7000 years, at least 13 great Cascadia quakes have occurred irregularly, with intervals ranging from 200 to 800 years¹⁷. Smaller earthquakes, though less powerful, can still cause significant damage to infrastructure. Given the proximity to the Cascadia Subduction Zone, Orick CSD should be aware of the potential hazards associated with earthquakes.

Data provided by the Humboldt County Geographic Information System (GIS)¹⁸ reveals that the Orick valley lies between the Grogan Fault (considered to be inactive) and Bald Mountain-Big Lagoon Fault zones which are considered potentially active¹⁹. Other active faults include the Trinidad and McKinleyville Faults, located 11.1 miles south and 16.5 miles south, respectively²⁰. These faults have experienced recent movement and are considered geologically young in comparison to older faults. The nearest Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zones are approximately 15 miles south in the Trinidad area and are also considered to be active.

GIS data indicates that the soils immediately surrounding Orick CSD have low instability. However, it is worth noting that certain soil classifications within the National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program's Soils Class D exhibit the potential for liquefaction events resulting from a major earthquake²¹. Liquefaction refers to the phenomenon where saturated or partially saturated soil temporarily loses its strength and behaves like a liquid during seismic shaking. This can occur in areas with loose, sandy, or silty soils that are saturated with water. Liquefaction poses a significant risk to the stability of structures and infrastructure, potentially leading to ground failure and damage during an earthquake.

According to the geotechnical evaluation projects conducted for the Redwood Creek Levee in the Orick Valley, there is a potential for liquefaction in the event of a major earthquake²². The significance of this potential liquefaction to Orick CSD is that infrastructure near a liquefaction zone may necessitate proactive measures to reduce vulnerability. Future projects should be accompanied by geotechnical studies and ongoing monitoring, risk assessment, and mitigation strategies to ensure the safety of District infrastructure.

Tsunamis

Tsunamis have the potential to impact a substantial portion of the Orick Valley in all low-lying areas including the Highway 101 corridor and town proper which are at a high or moderate risk for tsunami inundation due to a tsunami's ability to travel a considerable distance up coastal creeks and rivers²³. Humboldt County and the Orick valley have a long history of tsunami occurrences due to tectonic activity from the Cascadia Subduction Zone, local

¹⁷ <https://humboldt.gov/DocumentCenter/View/55541/8-Earthquake-Flood-Tsunami-Is-Humboldt-County-Ready?bidId=>

¹⁸ <https://webgis.co.humboldt.ca.us/HCEGIS2.0/>

¹⁹ <https://humboldt.gov/Archive/ViewFile/Item/785>

²⁰ Geotechnical Exploration Report for Water System Improvement Project 2020

²¹ https://maps.indiana.edu/previewMaps/Geology/Seismic_Earthquake_Liquefaction_Potential.html

²² <https://humboldt.gov/Archive/ViewFile/Item/785>

²³ https://nws.weather.gov/nthmp/assessments/2001assessment/R-14_Dengler.pdf

geomorphology, and proximity to the Pacific Ocean. There are also first-person accounts and legends about tsunamis from local native American tribes²⁴. Since 1855, the region has experienced 24 tsunamis with 19 arriving from large distances and the remainder originating locally²⁵.

Notable tsunami events include the 1964 Alaska Earthquake and 2011 Japan Tsunami. In 1964, the Prince William Sound region of Alaska experienced a 9.2 magnitude earthquake, triggering a powerful tsunami. The tsunami traveled across the Pacific Ocean, reaching the shores of Humboldt County causing significant damage to Crescent City harbor and waterfront areas, leading to the loss of lives and widespread destruction²⁶. On March 11, 2011, a magnitude 9.0 earthquake struck off the coast of Japan. Tsunami warnings were triggered and coastal areas in tsunami hazard zones were evacuated as a precautionary measure. The resulting tsunami generated waves that traveled across the Pacific Ocean eventually impacting Humboldt County. Although the impact was less severe compared to the 1964 Crescent City tsunami, the region experienced increased wave activity and tidal surges which caused damage in Crescent City Harbor.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Humboldt County, and Redwood Coast Tsunami Work Group provide tsunami preparedness to protect its residents and visitors in the event of a tsunami threat²⁷. The county has established a comprehensive warning system consisting of ~~sirens~~, emergency broadcasts, cell phone notifications, and official notifications to ensure timely alerts. Evacuation routes and maps have been identified to guide people to safe areas away from the coast with updated maps, including ones for the Orick valley, being released periodically²⁸.

The Orick community is recognized by the National Weather Service as "TsunamiReady" due to its efforts toward tsunami preparedness. Ongoing public education and outreach initiatives, including engagement with schools located in tsunami hazard zones, ensure that the community is well-informed. Additionally, Orick has a 24-hour warning point and maintains coordination with the emergency operations center. Multiple communication channels are in place to ensure the receipt of timely tsunami warnings and information²⁹.

Sea Level Rise

Sea level rise refers to an increase in the average sea level over time. This is anticipated to affect the Northern California coastline in some way over the next 50 to 100 years with the most recent projections estimating three to seven feet in rise³⁰. Global average sea level has risen 8–9 inches (21–24 centimeters) since 1880 due to human-induced climate change and associated atmospheric and oceanic warming with further acceleration expected in the coming

²⁴ <http://npshistory.com/publications/redw/native-stories-earthquakes-tsunamis.pdf>

²⁵ <https://www.rediscoveringthegoldenstate.com/chasing-earthquakes-and-tsunami-in-humboldt-county-and-the-northwest-coast/>

²⁶ <https://earthquake.usgs.gov/earthquakes/events/alaska1964/>

²⁷ <https://rctwg.humboldt.edu/warnings/official>

²⁸ https://rctwg.humboldt.edu/sites/default/files/brochure_orick.pdf

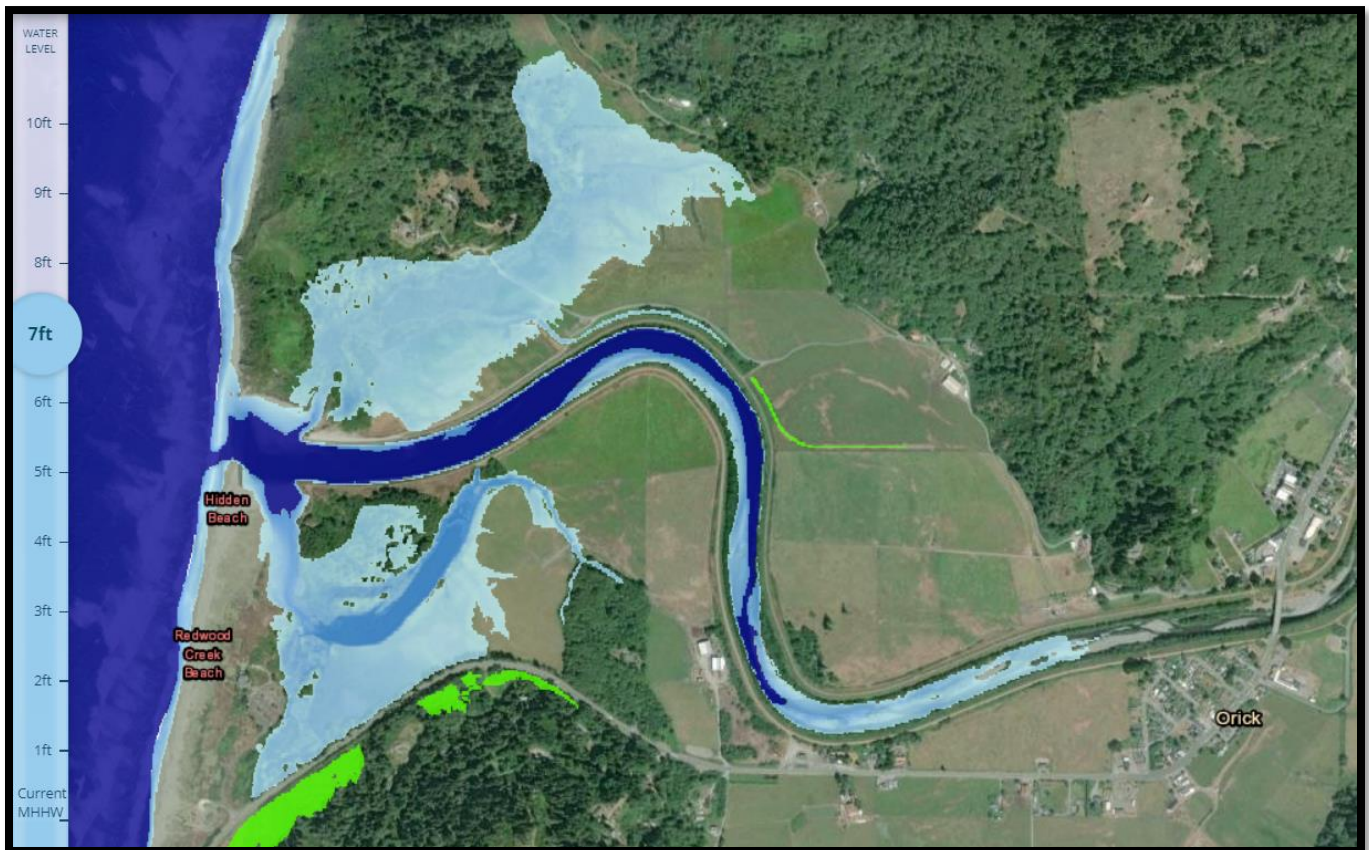
²⁹ <https://humboldt.gov.org/DocumentCenter/View/71770/Sea-Level-Rise-Public-Workshop-Presentation-3-26-19-PDF?bidId=>

³⁰ GHD, Sea Level Rise Adaptation Plan for Transportation Infrastructure and other Critical Resources in the Eureka Slough Hydrographic Area. Section 1.7: Sea Level Rise Projections. March 2021.

decades³¹. Scientists project a potential increase of up to 66 inches along certain segments of California's coast by 2100³². In Orick, the immediate risks stem from powerful storm events influenced by El Niño, combined with high tides and large waves. However, the long-term impacts are predicted to become more frequent and severe as the century progresses.

Sea level rise poses potential risks to water and future wastewater infrastructure owned and managed by Orick CSD. As sea levels continue to rise, the District's coastal location exposes its infrastructure to potential damage and disruption. While three feet of rise is unlikely to have a significant impact on the District, seven feet of rise has the potential to create a small bay at the mouth of Redwood Creek that may impact District infrastructure (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Estimated Impact of Sea Level Rise (7ft)



One of the primary concerns is the increased risk of inundation and flooding. As sea levels rise, low-lying areas within the Orick CSD may experience more frequent and prolonged flooding events. This can lead to waterlogged equipment, electrical failures, and damage to critical infrastructure components, such as pumps, pipes, and control systems³³. In particular, the

³¹ <https://www.climate.gov/news-features/understanding-climate/climate-change-global-sea-level>

³²

<https://www.coastal.ca.gov/climate/slr/#:~:text=Given%20current%20trends%20in%20greenhouse,coast%20by%20the%20year%202100.>

³³ https://documents.coastal.ca.gov/assets/slr/guidance/SLR%20Guidance_Critical%20Infrastructure_11.3.2021_FINAL_FullPDF.pdf

vulnerability of pump stations, which play a crucial role in the movement of water and wastewater, is heightened.

Saltwater intrusion is another significant threat to the Orick CSD's water infrastructure. Rising sea levels can result in the intrusion of saltwater into underground aquifers and freshwater sources, compromising the quality and availability of drinking water. Saltwater contamination can corrode pipes and other infrastructure components, leading to leaks, water quality issues, and reduced system efficiency³⁴.

Collaboration with regional and state agencies, as well as experts in coastal engineering and climate adaptation, is essential for developing comprehensive resilience plans. By incorporating sea level rise projections and considering adaptive strategies into infrastructure design and maintenance practices, the Orick CSD can work towards safeguarding its water and wastewater systems and ensuring the continued provision of reliable services to the community.

Flooding

The history of floods in the Orick Valley has prompted the implementation of flood control measures, particularly the construction of levees along Redwood Creek. The United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) initiated the flood control project after the devastating floods in 1964, which were preceded by significant floods in 1950, 1953, and 1955³⁵.

The flood control project in Orick consists of two earthen embankment levees and associated infrastructure, spanning approximately 3.4 miles. Construction of the levee system by USACE started in 1966 and was completed in 1968. Humboldt County is responsible for levee operation and maintenance as the Non-Federal Sponsor. The Redwood Creek Federal Flood Control Project (Flood Control Project) provides flood protection to the Orick community and surrounding agricultural lands. The maintenance of the levees has faced challenges due to funding constraints, permit restrictions, and concerns about threatened and endangered species³⁶. ~~The USACE, Humboldt County, California Coastal Commission, California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), NOAA Fisheries, and Redwood Creek Watershed Group (RCWG) acknowledge the need for changes in levee maintenance practices to align with the habitat requirements of coho salmon while maintaining flood control~~³⁷.

According to Humboldt County, the annual maintenance program includes ~~gravel extraction, vegetation removal, inspections, surveying,~~ and repair of system infrastructure addressing ~~conveyance capacity,~~ structural damage, encroachments, and accessibility issues³⁸. Sediment deposition and vegetation growth within the channel and on the side-slopes reduce conveyance capacity.

The capacity of the Flood Control Project, while still substantial, is less than the original design intent due to currently impaired by the deposition of large volumes of sediment, ~~resulting in a reduced flood capacity.~~ Construction In addition, construction of the levees has diminished the

³⁴ https://documents.coastal.ca.gov/assets/slr/guidance/SLR%20Guidance_Critical%20Infrastructure_11.3.2021_FINAL_FullPDF.pdf

³⁵ <https://humboldt.gov.org/2485/Levee-Management>

³⁶ <http://npshistory.com/publications/redw/redwood-creek-iws.pdf>

³⁷ https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/tmdl/records/region_1/2010/ref3678.pdf

³⁸ <https://humboldt.gov.org/Archive/ViewFile/Item/795>

ability of North and South Sloughs to flush sediment, leading to flooding of adjacent privately owned pastures and public roads. Fundamental rehabilitation of the Flood Control Project ~~is would be~~ necessary to accommodate sediment inflow and achieve a sustainable an acceptable level of flood protection comparable to the original design intent that can be sustained with regular maintenance³⁹.

In 2014, Humboldt County conducted a planning study funded by the CDFW through the Fisheries Restoration Grant Program. The study developed conceptual designs for a multiple-objective project on the lower Redwood Creek and estuary, aiming to achieve both estuary restoration and levee rehabilitation⁴⁰. The planning study focused on facilitating stakeholder dialogue and enhancing the understanding of natural processes, desired conditions, and potentially feasible project concepts.

The desired outcomes for the flood control project in terms of rehabilitation include achieving an acceptable and sustainable level of flood protection for the Orick community. The minimum acceptable protection level is the 1% recurrence interval (100-year) flow with three feet of freeboard (the difference in elevation from flood surface elevation to the reference point above the surface), while the preferred protection level is the 0.5% recurrence interval (200-year) flow with three feet of freeboard⁴¹. Sustainability will be achieved when the flood protection accommodates potential future changes in bed elevations and does not rely on gravel extraction and vegetation treatments in the Redwood Creek channel. Additionally, the goal is to upgrade the levee embankments to meet applicable USACE and FEMA performance criteria, regain-maintain active status within the USACE Rehabilitation and Inspection Program, and meet all standards for certification and accreditation on the FEMA flood map. ~~The County aims to reduce long term levee maintenance costs by minimizing the overall length of the levees and focusing the Flood Control Project on protecting structures and infrastructure.~~

On January 13, 2024, Redwood Creek reached a gauge height of 30.04 feet which is only 2 feet lower than the minor flood stage of 32 feet⁴². This prompted levee monitoring for visible leaks or ponding. A levee break could cause severe flooding in the Orick community potentially leading to loss of life and property. Major flooding in the area could also damage District infrastructure and leave residents without potable water for an undetermined amount of time. Due to this, it would be beneficial for the District to have a "levee ready" emergency action plan in place for potential flood events. This could include establishing procedures in coordination with the County Public Works and the Office of Emergency Services (OES) for monitoring creek levels, notifying residents of potential flood conditions, levee monitoring protocols, and thresholds for evacuation recommendations.

In July 2024, the California Department of Water Resources announced a proposed grant award to Humboldt County OES that would include developing a Levee Safety Plan that addresses the

³⁹ <https://humboldt.gov/DocumentCenter/View/50961/Redwood-Creek-Concept-Design-Report---final?bidId=>

⁴⁰ <https://humboldt.gov/DocumentCenter/View/50961/Redwood-Creek-Concept-Design-Report---final?bidId=>

⁴¹ <https://humboldt.gov/DocumentCenter/View/50961/Redwood-Creek-Concept-Design-Report---final?bidId=>

⁴² [USGS, Water Monitoring Data, Redwood Creek at Orick CA \(Gauge 11482500\) for January 1 to 31, 2024. https://waterdata.usgs.gov/monitoring-location/11482500/](https://waterdata.usgs.gov/monitoring-location/11482500/)

Redwood Creek Flood Control Project. OES and County Public Works intend to coordinate with the District on the Levee Safety Plan.

Also in July 2024, Humboldt County initiated a two-year feasibility study with the USACE to consider alternatives for modifying the lower portion of the Flood Control Project to provide ecosystem restoration of the Redwood Creek estuary, restore connectivity with tributaries, and reduce flooding on adjacent property.

Wildfire

According to Humboldt County GIS, Orick CSD and its surrounding area in the Orick valley are located within a moderate fire hazard zone, bordered by high fire hazard severity zones to the north, east, and south⁴³. The 2019 Humboldt County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) states that the majority (72%) of the Orick-Redwood Park Planning Unit is zoned “High Fire Hazard Severity” with populated areas surrounding Orick, Highway 101, and the central coast region (12% of the Unit) zoned as “Moderate Fire Hazard Severity”⁴⁴. Historical fire data indicates occurrence of fires within close proximity to Orick, including a minor 567-acre fire in 1970 approximately 2.25 miles from the District’s boundary. However, the majority of fires occur within the high and very high severity zones to the east with fires within the immediate vicinity of the Orick CSD being infrequent⁴⁵.

Fire management and emergency response in the Orick Valley involve various partnerships between local fire protection agencies. The Orick Volunteer Fire Department (OVFD) of the Orick CSD plays a crucial role in community fire protection and emergency services. As part of the countywide mutual aid agreement, the OVFD actively participates in providing assistance to and receiving aid from other fire service providers within Humboldt County. South of Orick, County Service Area (CSA) 4 generally covers the developed areas along Highway 101 extending from Freshwater Lagoon in the north to Clam Beach in the south. CSA 4 (Humboldt County) provides fire protection services through a reimbursement contract with CAL FIRE to provide year-round fire protection and emergency response services based in Trinidad.

Additionally, the Orick valley and Orick CSD are within the CAL FIRE State Responsibility Areas (SRA) designated by the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection, which designates where the state is financially responsible for preventing and suppressing wildfire. Pursuant to a contract with CSA 4, CAL FIRE is the primary emergency response service provider for fire suppression and prevention to the southwest of the region, which is within CSA 4. The Federal Responsibility Area (FRA), where the federal government is responsible for preventing and suppressing wildfire, covers the area within Redwood National and State Parks which envelops the Orick Valley.

The 2019 Humboldt County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) identifies the assets and values at risk in the Orick-Redwood Park Planning Unit including residential homes, commercial and service industries, community or town centers, schools, and critical infrastructure

⁴³ <https://webgis.co.humboldt.ca.us/HCEGIS2.0/>

⁴⁴ CAL FIRE (California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection). (2007). Fire Resources Assessment Program (FRAP). [Map showing Fire Hazard Severity Zone ratings within various geographic areas, mapped by county]. Fire Hazard Severity Zones Map. Retrieved from http://www.fire.ca.gov/fire_prevention/fire_prevention_wildland_zones_maps

⁴⁵ CAL FIRE. (2018). FRAP. State Fire Perimeters 1908-2017.

components such as Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) substations and repeaters⁴⁶. Structural ignitability is a significant concern in the Orick area, particularly for homes located within the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI). Embers carried by winds from nearby wildfires can ignite homes, making home hardening and fire-resistant measures crucial for homeowners. Managing fuels and creating defensible space of at least 100 feet around structures is highly recommended to reduce the risk of structural ignitability and provide safer escape routes for residents and emergency personnel.

By actively engaging the community, adhering to regulatory requirements, implementing fuel management strategies, creating defensible space, and promoting community education, the Orick CSD can effectively mitigate the wildfire threat and enhance its resilience in the face of potential fire incidents. The Humboldt County CWPP emphasizes the importance of involving the community through public workshops and risk assessment to identify hazards and develop effective fire planning features. As of the date of this MSR, there were no completed local planning documents specific to the Orick-Redwood Park Planning Unit, but the community has the opportunity to pursue Firewise USA[®] recognition or establish a local fire safe council to facilitate the development of a community-level wildfire protection plan⁴⁷. A dedicated point person or group of individuals could step forward to lead these efforts in coordination with CAL FIRE, the OVFD, the Humboldt County Fire Safe Council (HCFSC), and/or the Redwood National Park (RNP).

⁴⁶ <https://humboldt.gov/2431/Community-Wildfire-Protection-Plan>

⁴⁷ <https://humboldt.gov/724/Firewise-Communities>

3.0 MUNICIPAL SERVICES

3.1 Water Services

Orick CSD obtains water from two active wells with a total maximum production capacity of 200 gallons per minute (GPM) and 215 GPM respectively with the capacity to produce 597,600 gallons per day (GPD) (0.60 million gallons per day (MGD))⁴⁸. Since the wells are near Redwood Creek, the District is subject to underground flow water right restrictions. Permit No. 16790, associated with Application No. 24732, allows the District to divert (pump) up to 112 acre-feet per year for municipal purposes at a rate not to exceed 0.232 cubic feet per second⁴⁹.

The District's wells are operated manually and are rotated into production each week and are run at lower than maximum capacity at a rate dependent on demand. Since 2010 the District no longer injects calcium hypochlorite into the well casings but instead uses a hypochlorinator that injects liquid sodium hypochlorite 12.5% by venturi. The chlorine is injected into the main where both well pipes converge just prior to the pump house's meter location.

After disinfection, water is transported to two 100,000 gallon redwood storage tanks set on ridgelines above Hufford Road, northeast of the District boundary and off Old State Highway southwest of the District boundary. The tanks, constructed in 1977 and 1987, are aging and, according to Orick CSD staff, are experiencing water loss due to leakage⁵⁰. This has been confirmed by the last inspection report for the District which states that both tanks are experiencing leaks and Tank 2 is likely beyond repair⁵¹. The current storage tanks provide less than one day of storage for district customers. California Waterworks Standard, Section 64554(a)(2), requires systems with fewer than 1,000 service connections to have storage capacity equal to or greater than its Maximum Operating Day (MOD) unless an additional source of supply or an emergency source connection can meet the MOD requirement. ~~Orick CSD does not currently have an additional source of supply or an emergency source connection.~~ The MOD for Orick CSD was recorded as 68,700 GPD on September 12, 2019. To ensure adequate water supply during emergencies, Orick CSD is working to increase its storage capacity to at least two or three times the current amount, as unforeseen events like natural disasters or equipment failures could necessitate relying on a backup supply for several days. Orick CSD is addressing this issue which is explained in the Planned Improvements section of this report below.

Stored water is distributed to consumers through approximately 4.1 miles (22,000 feet) of pipes made from Ductile Iron (DI), Polyvinyl Chloride (PVC), and Asbestos-Cement (AC). The service connections utilize pipes varying from ½-inch polyethylene to 2-inch polybutylene or galvanized steel, extending from the main line to the property boundary where a meter is installed. This distribution system is in good condition and is responsible for delivering stored water to consumers. Orick CSD has a Cross Connection Control Program that was adopted by the Board

⁴⁸ Engineering Report for Orick CSD Water System Improvement Project

⁴⁹ SWRCD, Division of Water Rights, Permit for Diversion and Use of Water – Permit 16790. Dated June 3, 1976.

⁵⁰ Personal Communication Orick CSD Staff 7/20/23.

⁵¹ SWRCB, Division of Drinking Water. Inspection of Orick CSD Public Water System #1200701, Orick, Humboldt County, September 8, 2021.

of Trustees on July 14, 2021, and is posted on the District's website. After taking a survey in 2021 the operator has nine service connections with backflow devices tested annually between Sept-Oct.

Orick CSD replaces failed meters with new lead-free meters that are manually read and recorded monthly. The master meter is located at the Orick CSD office and was replaced in October 2019. Customer meters are on average more than 20 years old. As Orick CSD does not have the ability to test each meter for accuracy American Water Works Association (AWWA)⁵² recommends Orick CSD may consider implementing a rotating replacement plan, removing, and replacing 5% of the meters or (6 annually) in order to complete replacement of all meters within a 20-year period. This process helps ensure accuracy and reliability, given the lack of facilities and/or capacity to test the accuracy of water meters in small water agencies. In November 2023, the District was awarded grant funding from DWR through the North Coast Resource Partnership (NCRP) for planned upgrades within the District's service boundaries, including replacement of existing water meters, valve boxes, and curb stops. Additional information related to the planned upgrades is provided below under Planned Improvements.

Orick CSD currently has the necessary water supply to meet the current and projected demand. Average water demand for the entire District is approximately 40,979 GPD (0.041 MGD) with peak daily use at approximately 68,700 GPD (0.069 MGD)⁵³. The average annual water production for the years 2009-2019 was 15.0 million gallons (MG), with a median annual production of 14.8 MG. The maximum annual production during the same period was 58.9 acre-feet (19.2 MG). Additionally, the maximum month average day demand reached 58,790 GPD in July 2017, while the peak hour demand (1.5 times the maximum day demand) was 72 GPM.

Table 2: Historic Water Production Summary

Number of Service Connections	143
Average Number of Active Connections in 2019	107
Average Annual Water Production Years 2009-2019 (MG)	15.0
Median Annual Water Production Years 2009-2019 (MG)	14.8
Maximum Annual Production Years 2009-2019 (Acre-Ft)	58.9
Maximum Annual Production Years 2009-2019 (MG)	19.2
Average Day Demand (GPD)	40,979
Average Day Demand (GPM)	28
Maximum Month Average Day Demand [7-2017] (GPD)	58,790
Maximum Day Demand [9-12-2019] (GPD)	68,700
Maximum Day Demand (GPM)	48
Peak Hour Demand [1.5 x MDD] (GPM)	72
Average Day Demand/Active Connection (GPD/Connection)	383
Maximum Day Demand/Active Connection (GPD/Connection)	642

Based on the average maximum production capacity of Wells 1 and 2, which is 298,800 GPD, and an MOD of 68,700 GPD, the Orick CSD system is operating at approximately 22.99% of its source capacity when supplying water to 143 connections and roughly 450 individuals. This

⁵² <https://engage.awwa.org/PersonifyEbusiness/Bookstore/Product-Details/productId/22085>

⁵³ Engineering Report for Orick CSD Water System Improvement Project

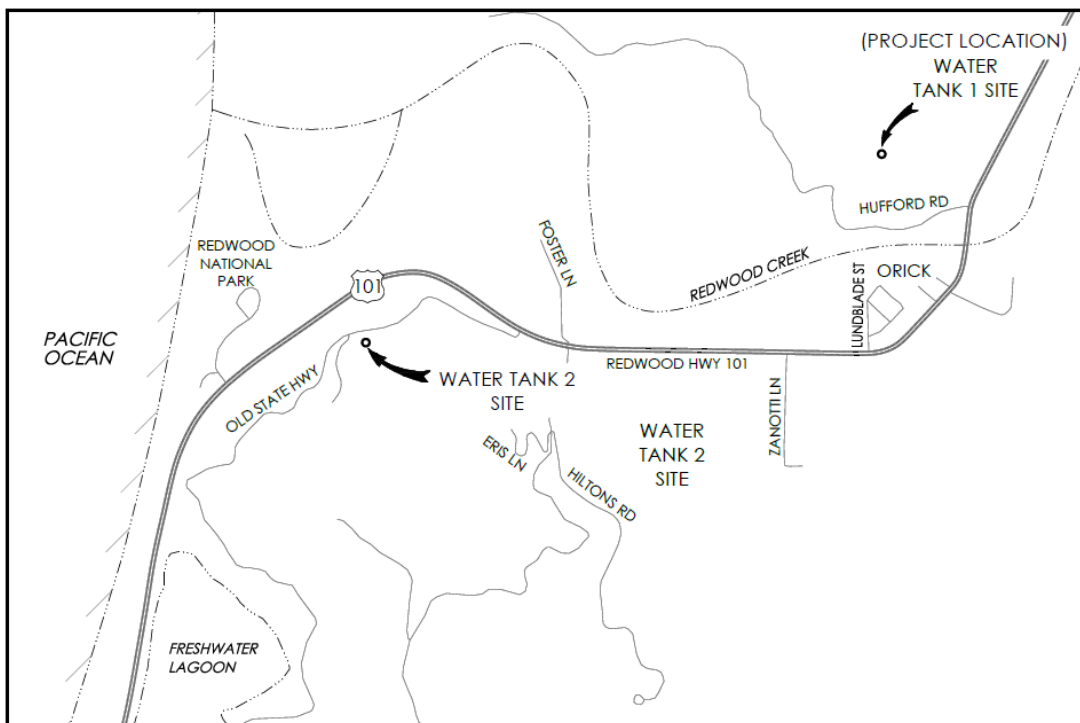
indicates that Orick CSD has adequate source capacity to support existing and future customers at current population growth rates. Additionally, based on the maximum annual production years (2009-2019) total of 58.9 acre-feet, the District is using approximately 53% of its permitted water rights.

Planned Improvements

Orick CSD has three planned storage improvement projects (Tank 1 and Tank 2 Replacement) and a meter replacement project. Orick CSD secured a grant from the North Coast Resource Partnership, Proposition 1 funds to replace all 143 connections with new smart meters. The project should be completed by September 2024.

The Tank 1 Project involves demolition of the existing redwood tank and construction of a new glass-fused, bolted steel tank of the same capacity. This replacement will address current leakage and seismic vulnerability issues. Construction will also include upgrades to the water and electrical lines, installation of a Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system, and an overflow outlet with riprap for erosion control. Funding for this project is being provided by the Small Community Drought Relief Program (Agreement 4600014877) through the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) and is estimated to cost approximately \$1.47 million for all three project phases. Construction is anticipated to be completed by June 30, 2025.

Figure 5: Orick CSD Water Tank Sites



The Tank 2 Project involves demolition of the existing redwood tank and construction of a new glass-fused bolted steel tank. This tank will be constructed in the same footprint as the existing tank, involving over-excavation of the tank pad and installation of new electrical equipment, a SCADA system, and a six-inch overflow pipe. Additionally, this project includes replacing three

adjacent valves, a nearby PG&E power pole with a taller one for better clearance and constructing a 40-foot communications tower. Funding for the design and engineering of this project is being provided by the same Drought Relief Program as Tank 1 while demolition and construction of the second tank are being funded by the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) (Project No. 1200701-001 C)⁵⁴.

As previously described, Orick CSD was awarded grant funding from DWR through the NCRP [Proposition 1 Round 2 Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Implementation Grant, Agreement No. 4600015413, dated November 22, 2023] to support the replacement of 142 existing water meters within District's water distribution network with new, modern water meters (smart meters) in order to improve operational efficiency and prevent water loss. The project also includes replacement of valve boxes and angle curb stops, which will occur at a small portion of the water meter locations. These improvements are anticipated to be completed between September 2024 and March 2025.

Funding Sources

To help address infrastructure needs and comply with state regulations, Orick CSD can explore various potential funding sources such as system fees, grants, and loans. The District may consider establishing additional system fees such as new connection, inspection, shut-off, and other fees to help fund needs. These should be determined by detailed rate studies complying with Proposition 218 "Right to Vote on Taxes Act"⁵⁵. District specific studies (master plans) or project specific studies (facility plans) could also be used to help support the Proposition 218 process.

The Division of Financial Assistance (DFA), under the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB), offers loan and grant programs specifically designed for water infrastructure projects. Orick CSD may consider these programs as viable options for financial assistance. One potential funding source is the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF)⁵⁶, which offers repayable financing. Orick CSD could also explore grant funding opportunities offered through various state programs. Proposition 1, enacted in 2014, and Proposition 68, enacted in 2018, are examples of state funding measures that allocate resources for water quality, supply, and infrastructure improvement projects. The Small Community Grant program may be available in the future to help offset local costs. These funds can reduce the financial burden on Orick CSD and facilitate necessary infrastructure upgrades.

Furthermore, Orick CSD could stay informed about the California Budget Act appropriations, including the Budget Acts of 2021, 2022, and 2023⁵⁷, which may provide general fund allocations for water infrastructure projects. These appropriations may be able to provide additional sources of financial support for Orick CSD's infrastructure improvements.

⁵⁴ https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/grants_loans/srf/docs/2023/2023-24-dwsrf-iup.pdf

⁵⁵ https://lao.ca.gov/1996/120196_prop_218/understanding_prop218_1296.html

⁵⁶ https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/grants_loans/srf/docs/2023/2023-24-dwsrf-iup-draft.pdf

⁵⁷ <https://dof.ca.gov/budget/budget-act/#:~:text=As%20previously%20mentioned%2C%20the%20Budget,Act%20upon%20the%20Governor's%20signature.>

3.2 Fire and Emergency Response Services

The Orick Volunteer Fire Department (OVFD) is a part of the Orick CSD and responds to incidents within the District and may respond beyond the District's boundaries, within an informal "goodwill service area" of approximately 121.5 square miles and a total response area of 123.8 square miles⁵⁸. OVFD is an all risk department that has mutual aid agreements with CAL FIRE, Redwood National Park, and Klamath Fire Department that enhance their response capabilities, particularly for areas located on the north end of the Highway 101 bypass, Bald Hills Road and on private lands west of the Klamath River⁵⁹.

OVFD operates with 9 volunteer firefighters who contributed 1,013 service hours according to the 2022 Fire Chief's Annual Report. During 2022 the VFD responded to 41 medical calls, 11 vehicle accidents, seven miscellaneous fires, one structure fire, and one hazardous materials (hazmat) call. Medical calls accounted for 67% of all calls in 2022. This is consistent with previous years' reporting by the Department. Volunteers dedicate two hours per week to training activities, focusing on incident response and equipment maintenance. They also participate in fundraising efforts, notably at the annual Orick Rodeo.

Water sources for the OVFD include the District hydrant system extending along U.S. 101 from the Visitors Center in the south to north of Orick Hill Lane, and outside the hydrant network OVFD and mutual aid partners may use individual on-site water tanks, a pond below Elk Camp barn, Freshwater Lagoon, and the Garland Pond. A standpipe connected to the District water system at the Orick Fire Station is used for filling engines and water tenders⁶⁰. These locations have been identified through CWPP community workshops, but further coordination and validation with local firefighting personnel will be necessary to ensure their suitability and effectiveness as water sources for fire protection purposes.

OVFD utilizes a range of equipment to carry out fire protection and medical aid services including a water tender, one engine pumper (1991 Pierce Engine Pumper), a 1998 F450 4x4 pickup truck equipped with water storage and Jaws-of-Life, and a rescue van that also carries a Jaws-of-Life. These resources enable the OVFD to effectively respond to emergency calls within Orick and its surrounding areas.

Several key trends emerged regarding the OVFD's performance between the North County Regional Fire Services Municipal Service Review of 2017 and the Humboldt County Fire Chiefs' Association Annual Report of 2022. Between 2010 and 2015, incident responses varied, with a peak of 169 incidents reported in 2020. Medical emergencies constituted a significant portion of their workload, ranging from 43% to 63% of responses between 2010-15 and 68% in the 2020 report. Training hours remained consistent at 52 hours per year, except for a notable increase to 300 hours in 2015 which remained the same in the 2020 report but went down to 150 in 2022. Maintenance hours were reported as 52 hours per year, except for 150 hours in 2015 which also remained the same in the 2020 report and increased to 175 in 2022. Specific response times are not mentioned in the available information.

⁵⁸ <https://humboldt.gov/DocumentCenter/View/101542/2020-Annual-Fire-Chiefs-Report>

⁵⁹ North County Regional Fire Services MSR 2016

⁶⁰ https://humboldt.gov/DocumentCenter/View/71001/41-Orick-Redwood-Park-Planning-Unit-Action-Plan_Final_Revised-12719

Department needs were noted that may have an adverse effect on response times including the extended service area and equipment needs. The demand for service outside the District's boundary strains the department's limited resources, with properties inside the boundary subsidizing fire protection services provided to properties within the out of district goodwill response area.

Equipment needs may also impact response times and/or capability. Specific needs include a generator to provide emergency backup power for critical facilities such as the water system, fire hall, Orick office, and the community hall. Acquiring a newer set of Jaws of Life for vehicle accidents is also necessary. Furthermore, the challenges associated with accessing training and balancing departmental commitments with other obligations need to be addressed to improve overall response and level of service.

The Insurance Services Office Public Protection Classification (ISO PPC) is a rating system used by insurance companies to determine fire insurance rates, with 1 being the highest level of fire protection and 10 being the lowest. For OVFD, areas within 1,000 feet of a hydrant have a PPC rating of 7, indicating an adequate level of fire protection. However, in areas where the OVFD has to transport water by water tender (more than 1,000 feet from a hydrant), in particular the Hufford Road area beyond Viewcrest Drive, the PPC rating is 9 which indicates a lower level of fire protection. According to the ISO "the water delivery system must be available 365 days a year and provide at least 250 GPM for a two-hour duration within 5 minutes of the arrival of the first apparatus⁶¹".

3.3 Wastewater Services

Current Status of Wastewater Powers

As discussed under Section 2.2 – Formation and Development, Orick CSD has been working on developing wastewater infrastructure since the 1970s. In March 2011, Orick submitted an "Application for Reorganization" to Humboldt LAFCo, seeking approval for the reactivation of wastewater powers (Resolution 11-02)⁶². On May 18, 2011, LAFCo approved the application thereby reactivating wastewater powers for the District⁶³. This granted Orick the authority to provide wastewater services and established a path forward for the design development and implementation of a wastewater treatment and disposal system.

Project Background and Current Design Proposal

The community of Orick does not currently have a community-wide wastewater collection system, and all the residences and businesses rely solely on individual septic systems for their wastewater treatment needs. A 1999 study done by Oscar Larson & Associates (OLA) found that as many as 31% of the onsite wastewater systems including septic tanks, leach fields, and leach pits were malfunctioning or failing which highlighted the need of a municipal wastewater system⁶⁴. Many of these septic systems are decades old and are, or have been, failing resulting in odor nuisance, and negative affects to public health and the environment by way of

⁶¹ <https://www.isomitigation.com/siteassets/ppc/articles/hydrantstankersppc.pdf>

⁶² Humboldt LAFCo Resolution 11-02 (In internal files)

⁶³ Draft Environmental Impact Report Orick Wastewater Project SHN 2011

⁶⁴ http://northcoastresourcepartnership.org/site/assets/uploads/2018/06/NCRP_DemoProject_Orick-Report-Final_signed-sm.pdf

surfacing effluent, and contamination of local surface and groundwater sources^{65,66}. Additionally, the 2008 MSR identified the lack of a community wastewater system as the most limiting growth factor for the area⁶⁷. As no upgrades have been implemented since that time, it can still be considered the most limiting growth factor for the area.

In 2004, SHN Consulting Engineers & Geologists, Inc. (SHN) conducted a feasibility study to assess wastewater discharge alternatives for Orick CSD. SHN proposed a centralized system including a low-pressure grinder pump, sewage receiving station, pre-treatment screening, oxidation ditch for secondary treatment, sludge treatment composting facilities, hypochlorite disinfection, storage ponds, and land irrigation with treated effluent⁶⁸. The estimated cost for the treatment facility was \$3.8 million, with a projected additional \$120,000 in equipment costs. This conceptual design was deemed unpractical by local stakeholders due to the high capital cost, high cost to Orick CSD customers, maintenance requirements, land needed for development, unsuitability for a low-density population, and regulatory hurdles.

Recognizing the potential pollution issues and the need for action, in 2006 Orick CSD requested a declaration from the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors citing the OLA 1999 report and highlighting the malfunctioning or poorly designed septic systems. The declaration was granted, acknowledging Orick as a pollution problem for Redwood Creek, which is impaired under the Federal Clean Water Act⁶⁹ and classified “a priority watershed under the State’s Coho Salmon Recovery Strategy and North Coast Watershed Assessment Program, a Critical Coastal Area, and an Area of Special Biological Significance”^{70,71}. This opened the doors for more funding possibilities for the District and laid the foundation for the subsequent efforts and planning to develop a comprehensive wastewater treatment and disposal system.

In 2008, Jeff Anderson & Associates (JAA) reviewed the Orick CSD database compiled by the Humboldt County Department of Environmental Health (DEH). The database provided detailed information on septic system failures and malfunctions in Orick giving valuable insight to project planners and stakeholders. It identified four main causes for septic system problems which included disconnected pipes, lack of connection to a sewage disposal system, undersized systems, and infrequent septic tank pumping⁷². The review highlighted the challenges of obtaining septic system permits in the low-income area and recommended further investigation into the possible connection between septic system failures and contamination of Redwood Creek.

In 2010, SHN completed a Report of Wastewater Discharge (ROWD) for the District Wastewater Project which involved a comprehensive analysis of ground and surface water elevations, soil characteristics, alternative wastewater disposal methods, and site location analysis of biological

⁶⁵ Onsite Wastewater System Pollution Study for Orick CSD in 1999

⁶⁶ (Humboldt County General Plan Draft EIR Section 3.3 Utilities and Service Wastewater Capacity).

⁶⁷ <http://humboldtlafo.org/wp-content/uploads/Orick-CSD-ADOPTED-MSR-March-2008.pdf>

⁶⁸ SHN Consulting Engineers & Geologists, Inc. Feasibility Study: Wastewater Collection, Treatment, and Disposal For the Unincorporated Community of Orick. September 2004.

⁶⁹ https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/water_issues/programs/tmdls/redwood_creek/pdf/rwctmdl.pdf

⁷⁰ Orick Community Services District (ORICK CSD). Letter correspondence with Jill Geist, Fifth District Supervisor. Re: Request for a Declaration from the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors regarding a potential pollution in Orick. December 26, 2006

⁷¹ http://northcoastresourcepartnership.org/site/assets/uploads/2018/06/NCRP_DemoProject_Orick-Report-Final_signed-sm.pdf

⁷² Jeff Anderson & Associates (JAA). DRAFT – Humboldt County Department of Environmental Health Report Review. May 28, 2008.

resources⁷³. Findings revealed three areas most suitable for a centralized wastewater treatment system: APN 520-142-009 (120465 State Highway 101), 520-161-006 (west of Highway 101), and 520-161-010 (121388 State Highway 101). The conceptual design included the collection of wastewater from existing septic tanks using Septic Tank Effluent Pump (STEP) systems, pumping the effluent to a Recirculating Gravel Filter, and discharging it to a subsurface disposal field at controlled effluent release rates. Another project element included the retrofitting or replacement of existing septic tanks to be compatible with the STEP system. The report also identified that the project could be designed to be developed in phases due to ongoing budgetary challenges, uncertain funding cycles and a desire to keep wastewater service rates low.

Regulatory setting challenges were also identified in the ROWD report. One of the suitable sites for the project was located within the coastal zone and acquiring the inland portion of this site would be necessary for development along with a Coastal Development Permit from the California Coastal Commission. The ROWD further indicated that a use permit and an update to Orick CSD's public works plan to include the wastewater service boundary would also be necessary.

A ~~Final~~-Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Orick Community Services District Wastewater Project was finalized by SHN in 2012 (SCH # 2009082034)⁷⁴. Funding for the project was secured through Proposition 50 funds as part of the North Coast Integrated Regional Water Management Plan. The objective of the project was to construct a centralized wastewater treatment facility that would efficiently and economically treat wastewater for Orick CSD and accommodate a population of up to 672 persons by 2030⁷⁵. The EIR extensively addressed the environmental impacts of the project and outlined mitigation measures to minimize these impacts. Various alternatives were evaluated, and an environmentally superior project was recommended.

A 2014 Demonstration Project, conducted by GHD for the NCRP and DWR, assessed the feasibility of implementing a decentralized Septic Tank Effluent Pumping (STEP) wastewater system in Orick. This was recommended as the environmentally superior option in the EIR and the demonstration project further expanded on design and implementation of the project.

The proposed decentralized wastewater system in Orick involves replacing existing septic tanks with a STEP / Septic Tank Effluent Gravity (STEP/STEG) system. This system will collect wastewater through underground septic tanks on each property that will conduct primary treatment through settling and natural biological processes. The effluent would then be pumped to a centralized secondary treatment facility via small-diameter pipes following ground contours. This design minimizes infiltration, eliminates the need for manholes or lift stations, and reduces overall energy consumption. The project report recommended the Orenco Systems, Inc. AdvanTex process, which requires a Class II operator certified by the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) for the operation and maintenance of the system. For disposal, Orenco estimates that

⁷³ SHN Consulting Engineers & Geologists, Inc. Report of Waste Discharge for the Orick Community Services District Wastewater Project, Orick, California. April 29, 2010.

⁷⁴ SHN Consulting Engineers & Geologists, Inc. Final Environmental Impact Report: Orick Community Services District Wastewater Project. January, 2012.

⁷⁵ <https://ceqanet.opr.ca.gov/2009082034/3>

approximately one square foot of land is required for each gallon of wastewater produced per day. Feasible disposal area sites have been identified totaling almost one acre. Orick CSD would need to obtain utility easements to access potential disposal properties for regular inspections and system maintenance and/or acquire the properties from the current property owners.

The Demonstration Project report also explored several funding programs for the decentralized wastewater system in Orick. Common funding programs, such as the SWRCB Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development Water and Waste Disposal Loan/Grant Program, were identified as potential funding sources. The CWSRF provides grants and loans for planning and design/construction, with maximum grant amounts varying annually. The USDA program offered loans with some grant funding, typically limited to 75% of project costs or \$1 million. Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) were explored, with the possibility of partnering with the County to obtain funds for planning, design, and construction. CDBG grants prioritize projects benefiting low-income households which are particularly relevant to Orick as a Severely Disadvantaged Community.

Since that time, the District was awarded a \$500,000 Clean Water Planning Grant through the SWRCB CWSRF in 2022 for the purposes of the Orick Wastewater System project (Agreement No. D2101026; Project No. C-06-5924-110). Beginning in July 2022, the Orick CSD contracted with LACO Associates (LACO) to assist with project administration; development of a feasibility report that identifies the preferred type of wastewater, collection, treatment, and disposal system(s); preparation of a Design Report; development of 60% and 100% design documents; environmental review compliance; and wastewater rate study and financial analysis. LACO is currently exploring potential system designs and locations. It is anticipated that the District will need to acquire land for the treatment facility and drain field locations. As of May 2024, negotiations are still underway regarding potential land acquisitions. Once this process is complete, LACO can continue assessing potential treatment and disposal options and proceed with proposed system design. LACO will continue completing necessary technical studies, environmental review, and conduct the wastewater rate study to identify probable rates needed to complete the proposed improvements and provide sufficient funding for maintenance costs and a capital replacement fund. It is anticipated that an update to the [Final Draft](#) EIR for the Orick Community Services District Wastewater Project, prepared by SHN in 2012 (SCH # 2009082034), will be [drafted-completed](#) once a location is determined.

3.4 Other Service Providers

In addition to Orick CSD, other local governmental agencies that provide services within the boundaries of Orick CSD include:

- Humboldt Bay Harbor Conservation and Recreation District (countywide service provider of harbor management and Humboldt Bay resource conservation)
- Humboldt County Resource Conservation District (countywide service provider of soil conservation, agricultural services support, habitat conservation)
- North Coast Emergency Medical Services Authority (regional emergency medical services system manager including first responder and ambulance service-ambulance services provided by Arcata-Mad River Ambulance Service)

- Humboldt County (countywide provider of general government, roads, drainage, law enforcement)
- Yurok Tribe (a sovereign, federally recognized Tribal government that provides critical services to Tribal members living within the Yurok Ancestral Territory, including within the Orick District for which tribal government offices are planned at the new Shoreline Market).

Law Enforcement

Law enforcement services for the Orick community and surrounding areas are provided by the Humboldt County Sheriff's Office. Services include regular patrols, response to calls, animal control, community safety events, criminal investigations and more. In 2020, Sheriff Officers responded to over 60,000 calls for service, seized approximately 49,500 pounds of illegal substances, and made over 1,000 arrests⁷⁶.

Solid Waste Disposal

The County Public Works Department contracts for the operation of rural container sites, including in Orick, where residents in rural communities may dispose of household solid waste at noticed days and times (Humboldt General Plan EIR, Section 3.3, Utilities and Services). Material is disposed into 40-yard roll-off bins that are then hauled to a designated transfer station. Curbside collection may be available in Orick from Humboldt Sanitation.

Shared Services

Nearby community water systems, such as the Big Lagoon Community Services District and Big Lagoon Water Park Company, are located about 13 miles south. Therefore, merging these systems with Orick CSD is impractical due to the distance. However, there may be operational or administrative shared service efficiencies that could be explored.

⁷⁶ Humboldt County Sheriff's Office, 2020 Annual Report.

4.0 GOVERNANCE & FINANCE

4.1 Governance

Orick CSD is an independent special district served by a five-member Board of Directors that are elected to four-year staggered terms of office. Board meetings are held every second Wednesday of the month at 6:00 pm. Meetings are typically held at the Orick CSD Community Hall located at 101 Swan Road, in Orick.

Table 3: Orick CSD Board of Directors

Board Member	Title	Term
Ronald Barlow	Chairman	December 2019 to 2023
Robert Secor Jr.	Vice Chairman	December 2019 to 2023
Byron Frick	Board Member	December 2019 to 2023
Marla Zuber	Board Member	December 2021 to 2025
Kaitlyn Combs	Board Member	December 2021 to 2025

Elections for Board Members are currently still held in odd number years. In accordance with Senate Bill 415⁷⁷, which became effective on January 1, 2018, the District should develop a plan for moving the election of its Board Members to coincide with the statewide general election which is held in even numbered years.

Staffing

Staffing includes an Operator/Manager responsible for the overall management of District operations. The District has a Bookkeeper who oversees the accounting. Additionally, the District employs staff in its Maintenance Department to maintain and manage the operational infrastructure and facilities. The office administration is supported by a Secretary and a Clerk, tasked with managing administrative duties and assisting in the day-to-day clerical work. At present, the District has limited resources for additional staffing. However, additional wastewater operators will be required with implementation of the wastewater project and there may be an opportunity to hire a general manager to build additional capacity.

Accountability and Transparency

The District maintains a website in accordance with SB929 regulations⁷⁸ (www.orickcsd.org). Two years' worth of District audits are available on the website along with adopted budgets. The last available Consumer Confidence Report (CCR) is from 2019 and is available through the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB). The CCR is an annual report that must be distributed to consumers by July 1st every year.

⁷⁷ SB 415 prohibits a local government from holding an election on any date other than a statewide election date if doing so in the past has resulted in a significant decrease in voter turnout. The public policy behind SB 415 was to address waning civic engagement in politics as illustrated by declining voter turnout in federal, state, and municipal elections. The legislative analysis asserts that one major contributing factor to low voter turnout - the timing of elections - could be addressed by synchronizing municipal elections with statewide elections.

⁷⁸ SB 929 was signed into law on September 14, 2018, requiring all independent special districts to have and maintain a website meeting all the special district transparency requirements of State law including the availability of agendas, policies, and financial information by January 1, 2020.

Table 4: SB929 Website Posting Requirements

Type of Requirement	Description of Requirement	Is the District in compliance?
District Contact Information	The bill does not state the specific contact information required. We recommend posting, at a minimum: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Physical address ○ Mailing address ○ Phone number ○ E-mail address 	Yes
Most Recent Agenda	The most recent agenda must be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Posted at least 72 hours in advance of the meeting ○ Linked on the homepage of the website, navigating directly to the current agenda ○ Searchable, indexable, and platform-independent (simply put, post the agenda as a PDF) 	Yes
Financial Transaction Report	The State Controller's report for the District's Financial Transaction report must be posted or linked to the corresponding State Controller website.	Yes
Staff Compensation Report	The State Controller's report for the District's Staff Compensation report must be posted or linked to the corresponding State Controller website.	Yes
Enterprise System Catalog	As required by SB272, the Enterprise System Catalog must be posted. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Current system vendor ○ Current System product ○ System's purpose ○ A description of categories or types of data ○ Department that is the prime data custodian ○ Frequency in which system data is collected and updated 	Yes

Board agendas and notices are posted at the District office at least 72 hours in advance of scheduled Board meetings and on the District's website. Meetings of the Board of Directors are subject to the Ralph M. Brown Act which requires agendas to be posted at least 72 hours in advance of scheduled Board meetings in a location that is freely accessible to members of the public. The specific requirements of SB 929 and the District's compliance status for each requirement are delineated below.

4.2 Financial Overview

Orick CSD is primarily funded through fees for water services and ad valorem property taxes that supports the fire department. The District engages in financial planning by adopting an annual budget. The FY 2023-24 budget was adopted in July 2024 by Resolution 2023-07-12. The budget is generally divided into governmental activities which includes community hall operation and provision of fire services, and business (enterprise) activities including water services.

Over the last five fiscal years reviewed, the District has generally been able to plan for a net gain of approximately \$20,000. However, in FY 2023-24, the District planned for a net less of \$41,474. This is largely due to capital improvements including installation of a generator, acquisition of radios and pagers, and structure improvements at the new hall.

Table 5: Annual Budget Summary

Category	FY 19-20	FY 20-21	FY 21-22	FY 22-23	FY 23-24
Revenues					
Water Sales	76,608	85,500	99,500	106,000	114,320
Other Water Income	218	218	233	2,320	1,638
Community Hall	9,600	7,200	7,200	6,800	6,600
Fire Department	37,927	39,825	42,900	43,765	46,127
Total Revenues	\$124,353	\$132,743	\$149,833	\$158,885	\$168,685
Expenditures					
Water	73,400	68,507	82,644	86,675	114,859
Community Hall	9,800	5,200	3,250	6,800	6,000
Fire Department	30,725	34,575	41,825	43,400	89,300
Total Expenditures	\$113,925	\$108,282	\$127,719	\$136,875	\$210,159
Gain/ (Loss)	\$10,428	\$24,461	\$22,114	\$22,010	(\$41,474)

The most recent audit for the District covers FY ~~2019-20~~2021-22 and ~~2020-21~~2022-23. For FY 2020-21, operating revenues accounted for 63% of the District's total revenues followed by property taxes at 30%. ~~Alternately~~While in FY2022-23, operating revenues accounted for only 30%. Property tax revenues include multiple sources such as current secured property taxes, Proposition 172 fire revenue, and state timber yield funds. The major expense for the District continues to be water operations which accounts for ~~70~~58% of all expenses. In FY ~~2020-21~~2022-23, water revenues were not sufficient to cover water expenses. ~~However,~~Of the last ~~five~~six fiscal years reviewed, the District saw an overall net loss for ~~three~~five of those fiscal years which was largely due to water operating expenses exceeding water revenue and depreciation of assets. This is an indication that the District does not have a sufficient revenue stream to cover its expenses. The District may want to consider ~~assessing-increasing~~its water rates and/or reviewing the need for a special assessment ~~levying a parcel tax or assessment to fund for fire/EMS services~~ which would allow the District to utilize its general fund revenue for other purposes ~~to improve the District's availability of funds to support ongoing services.~~

Table 6: Audit Summary

Category	FY 17-18	FY 18-19	FY 19-20	FY 20-21	FY 21-22	FY 22-23
Revenues						
Property and Other Taxes	42,077	43,720	42,992	45,531	<u>49,632</u>	<u>109,090</u> ⁷⁹
Other General Fund Revenue	13,926	9,383	9,071	8,759	<u>9,530</u>	<u>94,085</u>
Water Operating	70,948	80,919	70,910	95,111	<u>92,263</u>	<u>132,323</u>
Water Nonoperating	28	3	1,859	1,518	<u>1,553</u>	<u>103,867</u> ⁸⁰
<i>Total Revenue</i>	<u>\$126,979</u>	<u>\$134,025</u>	<u>\$124,832</u>	<u>\$150,919</u>	<u>\$152,978</u>	<u>\$439,365</u>
Expenses						
Fire / Community Services	<u>28,644</u>	<u>34,440</u>	34,148	38,473	<u>67,088</u>	<u>71,962</u>
Capital outlay	<u>8,081</u>	<u>2,211</u>	1,251	-	-	<u>32,590</u>
<u>Net Depreciation</u>	<u>31,007</u>	<u>35,747</u>	<u>38,075</u>	<u>28,850</u>	<u>36,992</u>	<u>5,118</u>
Water Operating	100,422	89,017	106,608	91,073	<u>101,051</u>	<u>153,335</u>
<i>Total Expense</i>	<u>\$168,154</u>	<u>\$161,415</u>	<u>\$180,082</u>	<u>\$158,396</u>	<u>\$205,131</u>	<u>\$263,005</u>
Net Gain/(Loss)	(41,175)	(27,390)	(55,250)	(7,477)	(52,153)	<u>176,360</u>

The Final Financial Statements also show the District's net position which is calculated by subtracting total liabilities from total assets. Orick CSDs overall net position decreased from FY ~~2019-20~~2017-18 to FY ~~2020-21~~2021-22 by ~~\$7,806~~\$142,600 but then increased in FY 2022-23 by \$176,360. This is largely due to investment in capital assets and grant funding, ~~a reduction in the District's capital assets from depreciation~~.

The District's current ratio can be calculated by dividing its current assets by its current liabilities. This number indicates whether or not an entity is able to adequately cover all of its current liabilities (such as accumulated payroll, loan payments due within one year, short term bills, and the like) with its available current assets (such as cash on hand and accounts receivable). A ratio higher than one indicates the entity can cover its current liabilities and a number less than one indicates that the entity is unable to cover its current liabilities and may be at financial risk. For Orick CSD, the 2020 current ratio was 1.37 and the 2021 current ratio was 1.60. This shows an improvement in the District's ability to cover its liabilities and is an indicator of good financial health.

Table 7: Total Net Position Summary

Category	FY 17-18	FY 18-19	FY 19-20	FY 20-21	FY 21-22	FY 22-23
Total Current Assets	393,411	422,902	426,352	468,985	<u>469,111</u>	<u>569,793</u>
Total Noncurrent Assets	606,089	546,058	483,552	430,673	<u>371,469</u>	<u>444,681</u>
<i>Total Assets</i>	<u>999,500</u>	<u>968,960</u>	<u>909,904</u>	<u>899,658</u>	<u>840,580</u>	<u>1,014,474</u>
Total Current Liabilities	8,328	9,303	9,630	11,362	<u>8,809</u>	<u>16,417</u>
Total Noncurrent Liabilities	81,137	77,013	72,880	68,708	<u>64,336</u>	<u>59,857</u>
<i>Total Liabilities</i>	<u>89,465</u>	<u>86,316</u>	<u>82,510</u>	<u>80,070</u>	<u>73,145</u>	<u>76,274</u>

⁷⁹ FY2022-23 tax revenue included \$58,583 in prior years taxes.

⁸⁰ FY2022-23 water non-operating funds includes \$102,571 in capital grants and contributions.

Total Net Position	\$910,035	\$882,644	\$827,394	\$819,588	<u>\$767,435</u>	<u>\$943,795</u>
<i>Unrestricted</i>	370,280	346,365	416,722	457,623	<u>460,395</u>	<u>559,159</u>

Financial Reporting

Special Districts have several financial reporting requirements as required by law. Regarding the annual budget process, Government Code §61110 states that a preliminary and final budget must be adopted for the District on or before July 1 of each year. Government Code §53901 states that within 60 days after the beginning of the fiscal year each local agency must submit its budget to the County Auditor. These budgets are to be filed and made available on request by the public at the County Auditor-Controller's Office.

State law also requires each district to file an annual audit report with the County Auditor-Controller. According to Government Code §61118, the Board of Directors shall provide for regular audits of the District's accounts and records and shall provide for annual financial reports to the State Controller. All special districts are required to submit annual audits to the County within 12 months of the completion of the fiscal year unless the Board of Supervisors has unanimously approved a biennial or five-year schedule⁸¹.

As stated above, Orick CSD regularly adopts an annual budget and conducts audits on a two year cycle. These documents are submitted to the County Auditor-Controller in a timely fashion to ensure compliance with current regulations. Additionally, revenues and expenses are reported to the State Controller's Office in accordance with CSD law.

Long Term Liabilities

As of June 30, 20~~23~~²¹ the District had two long-term liabilities totaling \$~~63,69472,361~~, of which, \$~~3,837653~~ was due within one year. These liabilities include a State of California Loan and reimbursement payments to the National Park Service.

During the 1978-79 fiscal year, the District obtained a \$150,000 loan from the State of California under the Davis-Grunsky Act. These funds were used to construct a water source, and a pumping and distribution system. Repayment of interest and principal was deferred for ten years. Interest accrues at two and one-half percent and is payable semi-annually. Principal is payable annually over a fifty-year period. As of June 30, 20~~23~~²¹, the District still owed a principal amount of \$~~58,10065,497~~.

The amount payable to the National Park Service is a result of excess costs paid by the National Park Service related to connection of the Redwood Park Service's facilities to the District's water system in 1986. The original balance was \$11,250. Repayment terms provide that each monthly water service bill due by the National Park Service be reduced by one-third until the \$11,250 is exhausted. Loan terms include no interest. Remaining balance due at June 30, 20~~23~~²¹ was \$~~1,65621~~ and 2020 was \$~~2,270~~ and \$~~2,460~~, respectively⁸². The remaining balance as of April 30, 2024 was \$1,298.

⁸¹ California Government Code Section 26909 (5)(b)(1-3).

⁸² Orick CSD Final Financials for Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 20~~22~~²⁰ and 20~~23~~²¹. Note 4, Long-Term Liabilities: State of California Loan and National Park Service Payable.

5.0 ORICK MSR DETERMINATIONS

As set forth in Section 56430(a) of the CKH Act- In order to prepare and to update the SOI in accordance with Section 56425, the commission shall conduct a service review of the municipal services provided in the county or other appropriate area designated by the commission. The commission shall include in the area designated for a service review the county, the region, the sub-region, or any other geographic area as is appropriate for an analysis of the service or services to be reviewed, and shall prepare a written statement of its determinations with respect to each of the following:

(1) Growth and population projections for the affected area

- a) The current District population is estimated to be 346. This is a decrease from the 2010 estimate of 357. This decline corresponds with reports from the area of a general decline in population over the last several decades.
- b) A lack of adequate wastewater systems continues to be a main limiting factor for growth and development in the region. Development of a community wastewater system is a necessary step for revitalization of the community.

(2) The location and characteristics of any disadvantaged unincorporated communities within or contiguous to the sphere of influence

- a) The community of Orick has a 2021 MHI that is 43 percent of the California MHI and is therefore considered a DUC. The community is provided water and fire protection services by Orick CSD.
- b) Orick is a designated unincorporated legacy community under the Humboldt County General Plan. This designation indicates that the area is geographically isolated, has existed for more than 50 years, and has MHI that is less than 80 percent of the statewide MHI.
- c) Orick was designated as a blighted community by Humboldt County in 2005. This designation provides the community with greater access to funding for redevelopment and infrastructure projects.

(3) Present and planned capacity of public facilities and adequacy of public services, including infrastructure needs or deficiencies

- a) Orick CSD operates two wells with a maximum production capacity of 298,800 GPD. This is enough water supply to provide the community with potable water for average and maximum peak demand.
- b) The existing redwood water storage tanks are aging and have been reported to be leaking. The District has obtained funding to begin the replacement process for the tanks. Construction of Tank 1 is anticipated to be completed in 2025.
- c) The OVFD currently operates with nine volunteer firefighters. In 2022, the Department responded to 61 calls for service including 41 medical calls. The demand for service outside the District's boundary strains the department's limited

resources, with properties inside the boundary subsidizing fire protection services provided to properties within the out of district goodwill response area.

- d) Orick CSD is currently in the planning stages for development of a community wastewater system. Once the design for the project has been finalized and service area boundaries confirmed, it may be necessary for the District to request an amendment or revision of the wastewater service area designated in LAFCo Resolution 11-02 as part of the wastewater powers activation process in 2011.
- e) Orick CSD has expressed interest in providing recreational opportunities as part of their land acquisition for the proposed wastewater project, which would require the activation of park and recreation powers through LAFCo.

(4) Financing ability of agencies to provide services

- a) The District's revenues for FY2020-21 were sufficient to cover overall expenses. However, the District's net position decreased as a result of depreciation of assets.
- b) For ~~three-five~~ of the ~~five-six~~ fiscal years reviewed, the District saw an overall net loss. This was largely due to water operating expenses exceeding water revenue and depreciation of assets. The District may want to consider increasing its water rates and levying a parcel tax or assessment for fire/EMS~~additional funding sources such as new connection, inspection, shut-off, and other fees~~ to help fund needs.

(5) Status of and, opportunities for, shared facilities

- a) Due to the remote and isolated location of the District, shared service opportunities are limited. However, there may be opportunities to work with Humboldt County, local tribes, CAL FIRE, California State Parks, and the National Park Service. The District is encouraged to continue working with these entities to ensure the continued provision of services to the area.

(6) Accountability for community service needs, including governmental structure and operational efficiencies

- a) The District operates a website in accordance with SB929. Budgets and audits are available to the public along with Board meeting agendas.
- b) Orick CSD is governed by the five member Board of Trustees that are elected to four-year staggered terms. It is recommended that the District work with the County department of elections to shift their election schedule from odd number years to even number years in accordance with SB415.

(7) Any other matter related to effective or efficient service delivery

- a) Since the District's formation, there have been no annexations or detachments that would otherwise change the District's boundary. The District has two service-specific spheres of influence (SOIs), one for "all services" that includes water, wastewater, and fire protection that is coterminous with the current District boundary and one for "fire-only services" that corresponds with the fire department's goodwill response area, that extends north, south and east beyond its boundary. No change to these service-specific SOIs is proposed at this time.

6.0 ORICK SOI DETERMINATIONS

In order to carry out its purposes and responsibilities for planning and shaping the logical and orderly development of local governmental agencies to advantageously provide for the present and future needs of the county and its communities, the commission shall develop and determine the sphere of influence of each local agency, as defined by G.C. Section 56036, and enact policies designed to promote the logical and orderly development of areas within the sphere. In determining the sphere of influence of each local agency, the commission shall consider and prepare a written statement of its determinations with respect to the following:

(1) Present and planned land uses in the area, including agricultural and open-space lands.

- a) Major land uses within the District include Agricultural, Rural Residential, Commercial, and other low density residential uses. Growth in the area is limited due to the absence of a community wastewater system, proximity to the coastal zone, and potential flooding from Redwood Creek.

(2) Present and probable need for public facilities and services in the area.

- a) The area continues to be populated although growth is limited. Water services are essential to the community and to the provision of fire suppression services.
- b) A community wastewater system is needed to protect groundwater resources and sensitive natural resources in the area. It is also needed to support community commercial enterprises and increase economic sustainability for the community.

(3) Present capacity of public facilities and adequacy of public services that the agency provides or is authorized to provide.

- a) The current water system is sufficient to provide potable water to the community. Storage is limited but the District is in the process of constructing new water storage facilities that will increase overall storage.
- b) There is currently no wastewater system in place for the community. Wastewater is collected and treated with onsite systems that are reported to be aging and, in some instances, failing. This creates a high risk for ground and surface water contamination in the area.
- c) The OVFD has seen a decrease of volunteers of the last several years but continues to provide service within the Orick CSD boundary and to its extended goodwill response area. The OVFD is in need of new equipment and could benefit from additional training resources.

(4) Existence of any social or economic communities of interest in the area if the commission determines that they are relevant to the agency.

a) The nearest city is the City of Trinidad located 20 miles (approximately 20-25 minutes) south of Orick. Trinidad has limited services including a grocery store, post office, schools, and other commercial and community uses. The nearest major community is McKinleyville located another 8.5 miles south of Trinidad.

(5) For an update of a sphere of influence of a city or special district that provides public facilities or services related to sewers, municipal and industrial water, or structural fire protection, the present and probable need for those public facilities and services of any disadvantaged unincorporated communities within the existing sphere.

a) The Orick community is considered severely disadvantaged and has been designated a blighted community under the Humboldt County General Plan. Water and fire protection services are currently provided by Orick CSD. There are no community wastewater systems provided in the area. Due to the existence of sensitive natural habitats, the proximity of groundwater wells, and potentially failing onsite wastewater system, a community wastewater collection and treatment system is needed.



RESOLUTION NO. 24-06

**APPROVING THE ORICK COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT MUNICIPAL
SERVICE REVIEW AND SPHERE OF INFLUENCE UPDATE**

WHEREAS, the Humboldt Local Agency Formation Commission, hereinafter referred to as the "Commission", is authorized to conduct municipal service reviews and establish, amend, and update spheres of influence for local governmental agencies whose jurisdictions are within Humboldt County; and

WHEREAS, the Commission conducted a municipal service review to evaluate the availability and performance of governmental services provided by Orick Community Services District, hereinafter referred to as the "District", pursuant to California Government Code Section 56430; and

WHEREAS, the Commission conducted a sphere of influence update for the District pursuant to California Government Code Section 56425; and

WHEREAS, the Executive Officer gave sufficient notice of a public hearing to be conducted by the Commission in the form and manner provided by law; and

WHEREAS, the staff report and recommendations on the municipal service review and sphere of influence update were presented to the Commission in the form and manner prescribed by law; and

WHEREAS, the Commission heard and fully considered all the evidence presented at a public hearing held on the municipal service review and sphere of influence update on May 23rd, 2024 and continued to July 17th, 2024; and

WHEREAS, the Commission considered all the factors required under California Government Code Section 56430 and 56425.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Commission as follows:

1. The Commission, as Lead Agency, finds the municipal service review is exempt from further review under the California Environmental Quality Act pursuant to Title 14 California Code of Regulations Section 15306. This finding is based on the use of the municipal service review as a data collection and service evaluation study. The information contained within the municipal service review may be used to consider future actions that will be subject to additional environmental review.
2. The Commission, as Lead Agency, finds the sphere of influence update is exempt from further review under the California Environmental Quality Act pursuant to Title 14 California Code of Regulations Section 15061 (b)(3). This finding is based on the Commission determining with certainty the update will have no possibility of

significantly affecting the environment given no new land use or municipal service authority is granted.

3. This municipal service review and sphere of influence update is assigned the following distinctive short-term designation: "Orick CSD MSR/SOI Update 2024".
4. Pursuant to Government Code Section 56430(a), the Commission makes the written statement of determinations included in the municipal service review, hereby incorporated by reference.
5. Pursuant to Government Code Section 56425(e), the Commission makes the written statement of determinations included in the sphere of influence update, hereby incorporated by reference.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Orick MSR/SOI Update 2024 is hereby approved and incorporated herein by reference and the "All Services SOI" that is coterminous with the current District boundary and the "Fire-Only SOI" that corresponds with the fire department's expanded goodwill response area for the District is hereby confirmed with no changes, as depicted in Exhibit "A", attached hereto.

PASSED AND ADOPTED at a regular meeting of the Humboldt Local Agency Formation Commission on the 17th day of July 2024, by the following roll call vote:

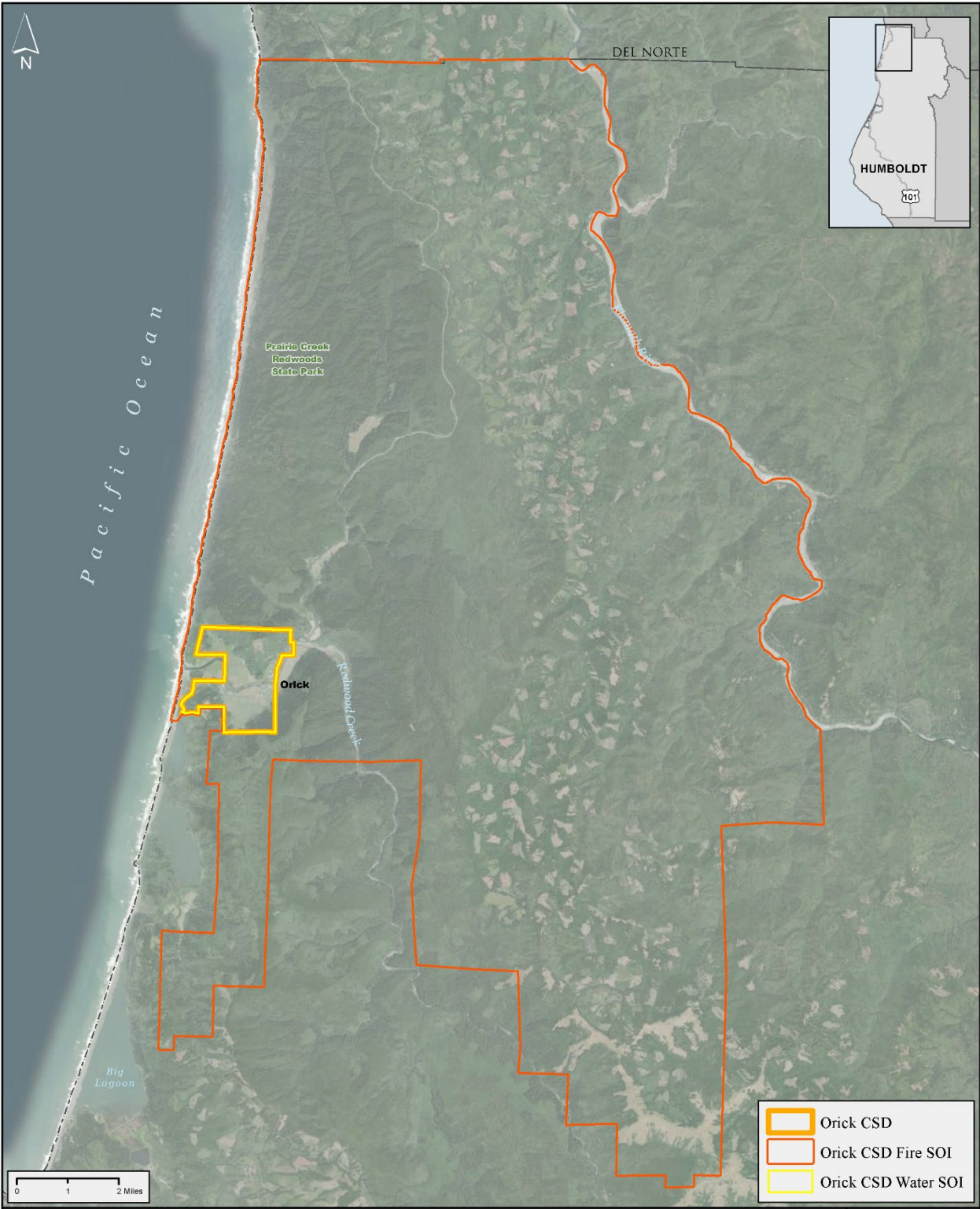
AYES:
NOES:
ABSENT:
ABSTAIN:

Michelle Bushnell, Chair
Humboldt LAFCo

Attest:

Colette Santsche, Executive Officer
Humboldt LAFCo

Exhibit A



Orick Community Services District

Figure

Map Date: 8/3/2023

Sources: Boundaries - Humboldt County GIS, Roads - US Census TIGER, Rivers - CA FRAP