

Riparian Paradise Map

There is a large, roughly-triangular parcel of land near Blue Lake, California that is bordered by the Mad River on two sides and contains seasonal creeks (Figure 1). This privately-owned land was used by the gravel extraction industry in the past. It is unlikely that this area will be developed, as it exists within the floodplain and riparian zone, just below the North Fork of the Mad River. Recently, the land owner suggested that he would be willing to consider offers from local land trusts, as the problems and liability associated with this property outweigh its benefits for him.

Homelessness and methamphetamine use are serious issues within Humboldt County, California. During the last few years, there have been many problems on this piece of land due to long-term campers, including violence, poaching, arson, illegal timber harvest, and dumping trash. Sanitation is also a major concern, as this site is upriver from the pump stations that provide municipal water service to the city of Arcata. The current land owner is ill-equipped to deal with these problems, and the Humboldt County Sheriff's office has been practically useless. The Humboldt Fish Action Council and the Mad River Alliance (two local 501(c)3 tax-exempt nonprofit organizations) have organized several events to deal with aspects of this problem.

The purpose of this project is to provide useful information about this land to decision-makers. Information will include property boundaries, waterways, an assessment of fish habitat quality, trails (separated by width), active and abandoned camps, and metal debris (abandoned vehicles, mostly). All data, including a detailed written report, will be sent to local land trusts. The Humboldt Area Foundation owns a 240 acre property (Leavey Ranch) adjacent to the eastern portion of the project area, which may make it an ideal candidate to acquire this ecologically important land.

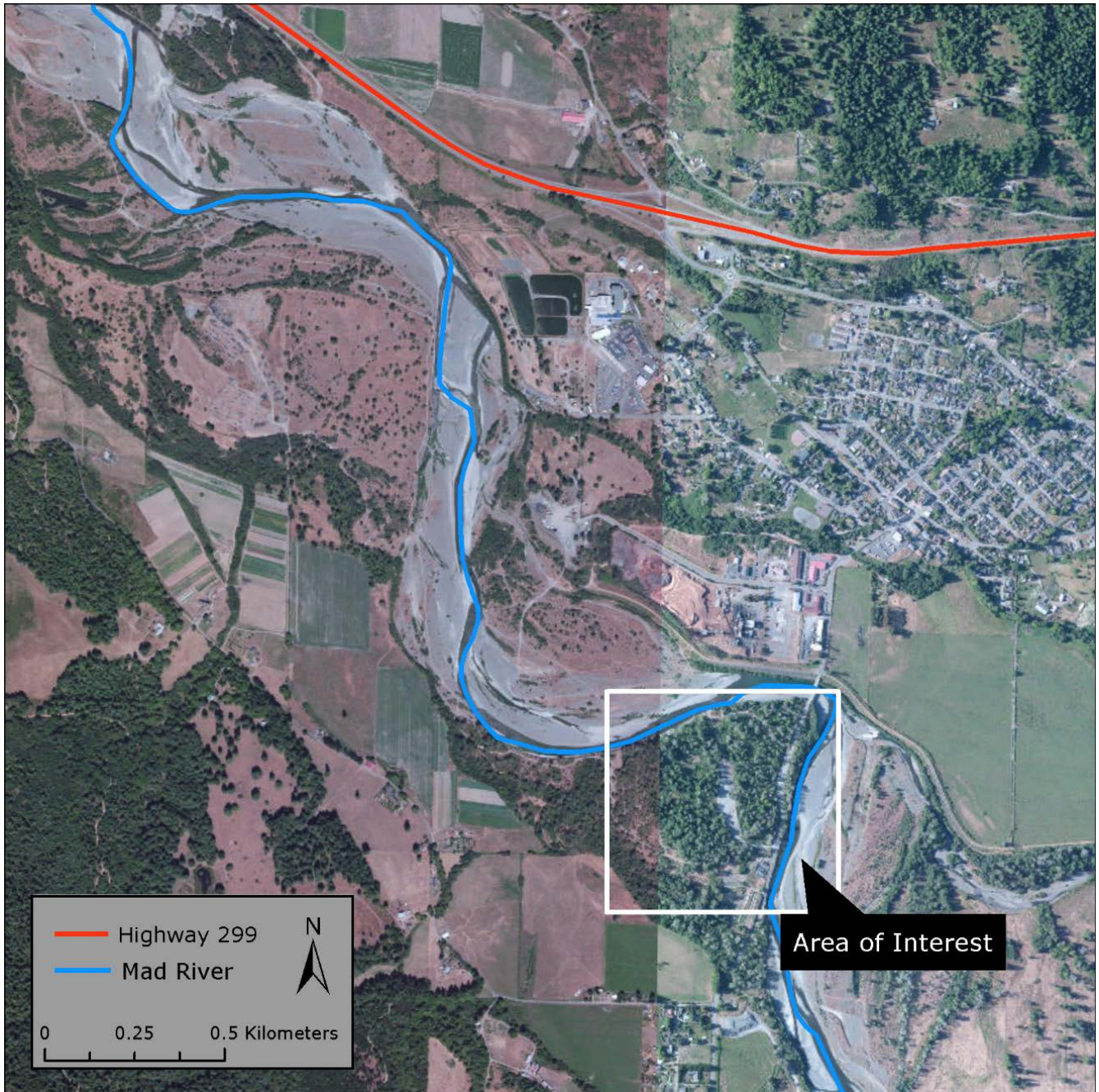


Figure 1. Area of interest near Blue Lake, Humboldt County, California