

Mendocino County Food Policy Council
MINUTES
May 29th, 2026 at 12- 1:30 pm

Attendance: Quinn O Ellis, Ashley Lueders, Claudia Wennin, **Evan Void, Wally**, Lily Caravello, Shai Schnall, Erika Romandia, Lucy Kramer, **Wendy**



[Join Zoom Meeting](#)

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Meeting host: mcfpc.coordinator@gmail.com

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87042632070?pwd=bngO4Y6XpBnHIPSWqQzFKcnCYbCZ3a.1&jst=2>

Meeting agenda:

<https://docs.zoom.us/agenda/doc/166d6b1b-a659-4807-9f10-3fc00a807ac8?from=gsuite>

Chat with Everyone:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/launch/jc/87042632070>

Or In-person location:

Ukiah Main Branch of Mendocino County Library

105 N Main St, Ukiah, CA 95482, USA

Mendocino Food Policy Council Purpose Statement:

The Mendocino County Food Policy Council's (MCFPC) mission is to promote a fair and sustainable local food system through research, collaboration, and collective advocacy.

Time (in minutes)	Item	Presenter
3	Welcome- Set and Setting Land, Labor, and Legacy Acknowledgements (our commitments)	All

2	Review/Accept Agenda - Agenda confirmed	All
10	Food Sovereignty Action in Willits - Claudia informs that WELL is the location for food security/sovereignty and we must keep in mind that we must connect with others to ensure that we do not re-invent the wheel. The goal is to connect with all that distribute food. The previous meeting on May 26th went well and future meetings will occur in Willits at WELL on June 8th 6pm at the Willits Economic HUB building - in person only. Idea is to fortify a plan that expands efforts beyond Willits and possibly broaden to various areas within the county. - Lucy chimes in about how MCFPC is able to assist. They want to ensure that there are mapping resources-gleaners, educators, farmers, supporting pilot programs, and finding what policies that need to be identified to advocate for. - Shai asks Claudia what efforts have been done to work and connect with our local tribal govts and groups - Claudia confirmed that they have been in contact with Sherwood, Buffy S. and Women with Bows.	Claudia Wenning
5	Gleaning and Food Rescue Efforts Across the County -Harvesting food that would have otherwise been composted or gone to waste. - Claudia confirms that gleaned food had in the past been delivered to the Willits school done by the Grateful Gleaners. - Meetings are held at the Little Lake Grange/Hybrid - Second Mondays and the 4th Thursdays 6-7pm. - Shai mentions that one of the things the Ukiah gleaners have done is go directly to camps or to the library to assist with those who may not have accessibility to go to the food bank.	Lucy
10	Share out from Emergency Food Systems Convening - North Coast Emergency Food System Partnership: Spanning Mendocino, Del Norte, and Humboldt counties, this community-of-practice partnership connects food-system workers and emergency planners to develop community-driven feeding plans post-disaster. <u>3 attended outcomes:</u> (1.) communication & connect (2.) Emergency feeding plan development (3.) Inventory local chain supplies and sources.	Attendees

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It was recommended by Lily Caravello ,we should plan on not relying on govt support - FEMA would most likely not declare an emergency for our area due to population, which reduces resource availability. ● Claudia recommends bringing in the support of our board of supervisors. Storage and refrigeration is the main concern for emergency needs and are working on identifying certain electives and small businesses that could support and offer space. ● Policy recommendations: MOUs - pre authorizations of commercial kitchens and food service providers so that they can be contracted to prepare food during disaster. Need to allocate a portion of designated funds to be marked for disaster only. <u>Leslie Gonzalez from Sonoma County is our point of contact to discuss more about MOUs.</u> Lily C. also mentioned how Nixel has not always been translated into Spanish or other languages to inform about emergencies. 	
10	<p>Community Garden Next Steps</p> <p>-Shai learned about a newly developed Urgent Community Need. On May 27th, NCO Garden Project - the State Street Community Garden was informed that gardeners must vacate by June . Want to talk to Dan at NCO to discuss - 63 gardens funded. Willits integrated Services Center Community Garden left the NCO network. Seems like NCO is relinquishing all the gardens- what is becoming of them now.</p> <p>A question that arises is</p> <p>There was no community involvement for decision making. Gardens were designed to feed underserved community members and this form of hunger relief is a dignified and culturally important aspect for our local community.</p> <p>Focus is finding the strategy to have our community members keep their crops.</p> <p>There is a MendoVoice article about this issue. (click MendoVoice to be directed to the article).</p> <p>Recommendation to document: make a google form so that anyone with a link can fill in which garden they visited and entered what are the needs for each garden to become sustainable. - Shai will develop this form</p> <p>Recommended to post this form also on each garden bulletin board.</p> <p>Strategy on how to obtain funds in order to keep water on.</p>	Shai/Lucy

	Ecology Center oversees gardens in the Bay Area. Interest in finding out more about their model.	
5	<p>MCFPC Communication Updates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • https://schoolofadaptiveagriculture.org/mendocino-food-policy-council/ • Will be updating the website in June and will be sending out a newsletter on June 5th. • If there are any events or posts you would like to add, please share on our padlet! https://padlet.com/mcfpccordinator/mendocino-county-food-policy-council-resource-page-10l8e2k30zrfey5b 	Erika
10	<p>National, State, Local Policy Updates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Market Match: https://savemarketmatch.org/ - LFPA - Farms Together (LFPA) toolkit from CAFF - Farms Together Call script from CAFF <p>-National -State -Local</p>	Council
5	<p>Policy Action Subcommittee Formation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MCFPC Policy Platform Development <p>No policies were discussed at this meeting. Priority discussion went to the Farms Together LFPA toolkit, script and about the urgent community garden updates.</p> <p>Walle shared a policy on the non-ornamental max.</p>	
5	<p>Community Share out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Upcoming Events, -Announcements -I have/I need <p>None were discussed at this meeting.</p>	Council
30	<p>Grasstops and Grassroots Updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -School of Adaptive Agriculture -WELL- Food Sovereignty -Public Health CalFresh Healthy Living -North Coast Opportunities, Inc -Ridgewood Ranch -Mendocino College Ag Dept -CDFA F2S 	All

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The Mendocino County Farm Bureau -Xa Kako Dile -Heart Beet Minifarm (previously VGFP) -Good Farm Fund: May Update: Steering Community, email to be added if interested -Laytonville Emergency Food Systems Needs Assessment -Other Organizational Updates -Regional updates 	
5	<p>Wrap-up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Next meeting time and focus, -Reiterate action steps 	Council

New Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/foodforallmendocino>

Mendocino County Food Policy Council
MINUTES
3:30- 5 pm
March 26, 2026

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86001115547?pwd=WXd1eSmmMp3kTmariTNYeoZG4RjLK0.1>

Meeting ID: 860 0111 5547

Passcode: 055357

Or In-person location:

Mendocino County Public Health - Conference Room 1
1120 S. Dora Street, Ukiah, CA

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Item	Presenter
Welcome- Set and Setting Land, Labor, and Legacy Acknowledgements (our commitments)	All
Review/Accept Agenda - Agenda accepted without comment or objection.	All
<p>Grasstops and Grassroots Updates:</p> <p>-School of Adaptive Agriculture - Caroline Radice shared that the Catalyst Grant for Indigenous Food Sovereignty was awarded to Women with Bows. EMAILED UPDATE:</p> <p>The School of Adaptive Agriculture (SAA), in partnership with Women with Bows and North Coast Opportunities, announced today that the Just Soup Project has received a \$50,000 Momentum Grant from the Greg Steltenpohl Pragmatic Visionary Award — one of the natural food industry's most prestigious mission-driven honors. The award was announced on stage at the Natural Products Expo West in Anaheim, where Tanda Bluebear of Women with Bows received a standing ovation following her remarks on Indigenous Food Sovereignty.</p> <p>The Greg Steltenpohl Pragmatic Visionary Award, administered through Community Foundation Sonoma County, distributes up to \$100,000 annually to early-stage ventures working to build a more equitable and sustainable food system. This year's selection committee reviewed a record number of applications before selecting three projects, with the Just Soup Project earning the top Momentum Grant of \$50,000. The Just Soup Project is an</p>	

Indigenous-led Food Sovereignty initiative which creates nutrient-dense meals from traditional ingredients including acorns, nettles, and huckleberries.

SAA is also pleased with another successful Farmers Convergence held last month, on February 19-21 at the UC Hopland Research and Extension Center.

-Public Health CalFresh Healthy Living - Laura Hargreaves shared that mini-grants were awarded to eight partners to support garden efforts and CFHL-related sustainability work.

CFHL has been defunding and the program operating out of Mendocino County Public Health will be ceasing operations this month.

-North Coast Opportunities, Inc - Haerah Baird shared that they awarded the CDNI grant, which involves incentives for WIC and senior farmers market customers.

EMAILED Update:

Market Match - NCO is funded through December 2026. Currently there is no 2027 statewide budget to continue this program.

NCO was awarded CDFA California Nutrition Incentive Program (CNIP) grant. Our project is called Mendo-Lake Market Access To Community Health (MATCH) and will provide farmers market incentive funds (\$15 per week) specifically for WIC and Senior customers. We are currently looking for organizational partners working with the WIC and Senior communities, to work with us on outreach efforts. Please email hbaird@ncoinc.org if you're interested in receiving outreach materials or learning more about the program.

LFPFA - we are joining advocacy efforts with Farms Together (comprising California Association of Food Banks, Fresh Approach, and Community Alliance with Family Farmers - 3 statewide organizations dedicated to food security and supporting small farms). Farms Together is in progress with advocacy efforts to secure statewide LFPFA funding. Championing the budget ask forward are Senator Hurtado and Assembly Member Pellerin. The coalition letter includes \$45mil for LFPFA (farm to food bank purchasing), \$15mil for climate disaster and emergency relief for small, underserved farms, \$15mil to establish a land access program in California, \$14.8mil to establish a new equipment sharing and farmer cooperative TA program, and \$9mil to continue investments in Community Food Hubs. Here is a sign-on letter people and organizations can sign in support of this effort. Please contact your Congresspeople in support of continuing LFPFA funding for our community.

-Ridgewood Ranch - Lucy shared that Ridgewood Ranch is hosting a festival to welcome spring and celebrate sheep programming on April 25.

-Mendocino College Ag Dept - will have a plant sale April 25 and 26 with more varieties.

Kurt Voight, the Director of Mendocino College Ag College is seeking a grafting teacher for inland. There has been a change in demographics to 30-40 year old students. A health clinic will be held April 12.

-**CDFA F2S** - Jenn Lutge shared that local farmers can also apply for CDFA grants to expand farms to produce food for youth programs.

-**The Mendocino County Farm Bureau** - not present

-**Xa Kako Dile** - not present

-**Heart Beet Minifarm** (previously VGFP) - not present

EMAILED UPDATE FROM MATT DREWNO:

Thanks for reaching out, here is an update on my work with Ecology Action and our new projects.

As of January, I am no longer employed with Ecology Action. I have also lost the seed bank that I created 10 years back, now claimed by Ecology Action. I am in negotiations to get my seeds back and re-establish the seed bank under a new name, the Victory Gardens for Peace Seed Conservancy. This new venture will be focused on conserving and making available a wide range of important crops which thrive on the coast and inland. We will focus on helping others save seed and participate in the conservation of these varieties for future generations. VGFP will continue its work with the Garden Friendly Community Resolution and community gardens on the coast.

We are starting our farm at Rainbow Ridge in Elk. We are establishing a small, organic seed company, Fertile Earth Seed Company. We are building out infrastructure including a greenhouse, fences, hedgerows, seed cleaning room, storage room etc... We hope to be packaging and selling seed in 2026/2027. We are looking for farmers who also want to grow seed to broaden what we can offer, together. The seed company and seed conservancy will both operate on Rainbow Ridge Farm in Elk.

Rainbow Ridge Farm is located a mile and a half from the coast, 1,000 feet up from the sea. We are mostly out of the fog, have good soil and abundant water. Our farm is on 55 acres, 13 of it dedicated to agriculture and 42 of it to forest conservation. We established a conservation easement in 2022 with our land partner and Mendocino Land Trust which protects our right to farm and the rights of nature in our forest. Its a unique form of agricultural land trust that we hope will inspire other farmers.

I still teach the Sustainable Ag classes at the coast campus for Mendocino College as well as classes locally on seed saving and biointensive food production. I have expanded into consulting, see attached flier. Soon, our website www.victorygardensforpeace.com will be updated as we transition away from Ecology Action.

The VGFP farm located in Mendocino is now known as Heart Beet Minifarm run by Matthew and Lama Gammatt.

-**Good Farm Fund** - **Shai Schnall** shared that the Fund awarded \$50,000 in infrastructure grants. The Farmerworkers Fund provided \$500 stipends to 140 individuals. They are currently having a campaign to raise money for the next round of funding. They are relying on the community for funds until grants are available.

-**Laytonville Emergency Food Systems Needs Assessment** - not present

<p>-Other Organizational Updates - Ukiah Food Bank shared that because gas prices are soaring the cost of transporting food is rising and they need to bring in more funds to cover transportation costs.</p> <p>-Regional updates - none</p>	
<p>Community Share out: -Upcoming Events: Mendocino College will have a plant sale April 25 and 26 with more varieties. A health clinic will be held April 12. Good Farm Fund will have a grantee award ceremony on April 3. Flourish and Flow Willits - new goat yoga classes. The dates are online. Ridgewood Ranch - yoga at Ridgewood Ranch on April 4 and April 11. Claudia Wenning shared that the next food security meeting will be held April 11 at the Little Lake Grange from 11 am to 1 pm. Atta Stevenson of CA Indian Water Commission & Cahto Tribal member shared that storytelling around a fire pit will occur the last Saturday of the month on March 28 at around 5:30 / beginning of nightfall. By the beach; near the green building. Good Farm Fund: There will be line dancing at Campovida to raise funds for the Farm Fund on April 10.</p> <p>-Announcements - see "Upcoming Events" above. -I have/I need - none</p>	<p>Council</p>
<p>Gleaning Efforts Across County - MCFPC has been asked to help with organizing the network gleaning organizations in our area Gleaning efforts are a response to market failure and food rescue opportunities. Yassin Ford(?) Has been working with FPC to establish drops at farmers markets in Mendocino County. The produce would have to be collected and then decide where the food goes. They are creating an initiative to ask the community to buy products from farmers markets to donate on the side, which would then be collected.</p> <p>Query - can gleaning groups use the NCO volunteer database? If they make an ad and send it to FPC, it can be posted on the Food for All site.</p> <p>Regional gleaning efforts have created a patchwork. They need smaller groups to come together to coordinate. Needs may include insurance, mapping, identification of landowners, a labor force, processing to preserve the food and then to decide where the food is distributed - to food banks etc.</p> <p>The Ukiah branch Library has been organizing food distribution efforts at their location last fall</p> <p>Haerah shared that NCO and the School of Adaptive Agriculture hosted a gleaning event at a vineyard - they found the right parameters with an insurer to cover the efforts.</p>	<p>Lucy facilitates</p> <p>Action: Workgroup formation</p>

<p>Caroline suggested that someone organize communications for gleaners in a Google or Facebook group.</p> <p>Lucy will send an email through FPC to coordinate a gleaner discussion meeting.</p>	
<p>Hunger Relief FPC Subcommittee Report - Caroline advises that the gleaning efforts are great. When a farm has products to be gleaned, who do they call? The Good Farm Fund is doing amazing work especially for undocumented workers. Shai??? Is fundraising for people who don't qualify for SNAP and is doing work with Mendocino Grain Project re alternative grain crops, such as sesame, that is being affected by the war. They are working on stockpiling.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gleaning is great and in progress - Shai is project managing Good Farm Fund work to address needs in communities that are unserved by other programs. Let's all support Good Farm Fund. - Seed saving, specifically high-calorie staple crops- Caroline is working with Mendocino Grain Project on this <p>Tory at Lemon Fresh Design can provide the Mendocino Food Guide</p> <p>Claudia reminds members of the food security townhall. The event is on Facebook in Claudia's name. She wants to increase the interaction between groups to discuss hot topics and how to go forward.</p>	<p>Caroline</p>
<p>Policy Action Subcommittee Formation - Lucy wants to form a policy action subcommittee to discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2026 Candidate Forum - a forum for County Supervisor candidates and seated supervisors relative to food system objectives. The Committee would formulate questions and topics. Erika suggested including elected officials and candidates from various cities throughout the county. Suggestions were added to hold the candidates accountable to campaign promises. Betsy suggested formulating a pledge to be signed by the candidates. - MCFPC Policy Platform Development - Lucy states that the Tobacco Policy Platform document is a powerful document. It goes over policy priorities and is given to leaders and decision makers. Lucy suggests a FPC policy platform also. Lucy will follow up to see if there is subcommittee interest in developing this document. The National food policy platform should be reviewed and perhaps used as a model. 	<p>Action: Subcommittee Formation</p>
<p>MCFPC Communications Planning - Erika announced that by next month, MCFPC aims to have a newsletter with a calendar that shares upcoming meetings and community events. The School of Adaptive Ag has a website with a FPC tab/page. MCFPC is now also assisting in managing the Food for All Mendocino Facebook page. Erika's plan is to revive the account and share content on the Facebook page. There are plans to also design the new MCFPC page to have past and present content for public access. Erika is going to update the P&P's, adding a PR part to it. She is cleaning up the drive</p>	<p>Erika</p>

<p>and archiving old documents to a secured Proton Drive. The new website page for MCFPC will provide a link to minutes, documents, etc. She is creating a sustainable plan that will use the same website, email, etc. regardless of who is responsible for it. -Request for focus group formation</p> <p>New Facebook Page: https://www.facebook.com/foodforallmendocino</p> <p>Webpage: https://schoolofadaptiveagriculture.org/mendocino-food-policy-council/</p>	
<p>National, State, Local Policy Updates - Haerah shares:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Market Match - NCO is funded through December 2026. Currently there is no 2027 statewide budget to continue this program. - NCO was awarded a CDFA California Nutrition Incentive Program (CNIP) grant. Our project is called Mendo-Lake Market Access To Community Health (MATCH) and will provide farmers market incentive funds (\$15 per week) specifically for WIC and Senior customers. We are currently looking for organizational partners working with the WIC and Senior communities, to work with us on outreach efforts. Please email hbaired@ncoinc.org if you're interested in receiving outreach materials or learning more about the program. - LFPA - NCO is joining advocacy efforts with Farms Together (comprised of California Association of Food Banks, Fresh Approach, and Community Alliance with Family Farmers - 3 statewide organizations dedicated to food security and supporting small farms). Farms Together is in progress with advocacy efforts to secure statewide LFPA funding. Championing the budget ask forward are Senator Hurtado and Assembly Member Pellerin. The coalition letter includes \$45mil for LFPA (farm to food bank purchasing), \$15mil for climate disaster and emergency relief for small, underserved farms, \$15mil to establish a land access program in California, \$14.8mil to establish a new equipment sharing and farmer cooperative TA program, and \$9mil to continue investments in Community Food Hubs. Here is a sign-on letter people and organizations can sign in support of this effort. Please contact your Congresspeople in support of continuing LFPA funding for our community. - Summary of the legislative timeline as it relates to LFPA advocacy: - By midnight on June 15: Legislature must pass the initial budget bill, which will become the Budget Act once it's signed into law <p>Governor and legislative leaders continue to work toward a deal on</p>	<p>Council</p>

<p>the state budget package; deal typically includes amendments to the recently passed budget bill along with dozens of trailer bills addressing budget-related policy changes</p> <p>Governor signs the bills in the budget package (some bills may be signed in early July)</p> <p>June 1: Assembly and Senate policy and appropriations committee hearings may resume; these hearings typically include opportunities for public comment</p> <p>June 25: Last day for a legislative measure to qualify for the November 3, 2026 statewide general election ballot</p>	
<p>Wrap-up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Next meeting time and focus. Jenn wants to look at changing the time and date. Thursdays are not good because of the Willits farmers market and bad timing with school pickup, etc. She proposes Tuesdays at noon, every other month. Would like to have a hybrid meeting but need a meeting place. Lunch could be provided by gleaners, farmers, etc. *A survey will help with scheduling - Atta Suggests that the meetings be at Consolidated Health and can invite gleaners. Before or after the meeting, volunteer work at the farms can take place. She wants to invite tribal leadership. - Lily suggests moving Grasstops and Grassroots updates later in the agenda to be sure we have time for policy updates, etc. 	<p>Council</p>

New Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/foodforallmendocino>