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330 North Franklin, Ste. 8
P. O. Box 2553
Fort Bragg, CA 95437

Noyo Headlands Unified Design Group
Fort Bragg, California

707-964-2477
nhudg@mcn.org
www.noyoheadlands.org

Maximizing Happiness and Well-Being on the Northern Mendocino Coast

—By *Jim Tarbell*

Happiness and well-being have to be central considerations in building a healthy and sustainable community here on the North Coast. The reuse of the Fort Bragg Mill Site could serve as a catalyst for creating this healthy and sustainable community. Unfortunately, traditional market analyses of any reuse plan do not take happiness and well-being or the true social, environmental, cultural and economic costs of such a development into account. This marketplace failure has caused most of the major problems on our planet including global climate change, resource depletion, environmental degradation, wars over resources, economic collapse, political corruption and the disintegration of our middle class society into a world of haves and have-nots.

To make sure that the Mill Site Reuse is a model of maximizing

human and planetary well-being, it will be important to answer many questions that the market fails to address. These will include questions like: How much energy will be consumed by the Mill Site reuse? Where will that energy come from and with what environmental impacts? What natural resources will be involved? Will the project exacerbate the depletion of the World's limited resources, or will it help alleviate that problem? What will the environmental consequences be? Will the overall development be a plus to our health or a minus? Will a vibrant natural habitat grow where there has been an industrial mill site for over 100 years? How will the reuse impact the local economy? Who will reap the benefits? Will it provide living wage jobs? Will it maintain our homogeneous local culture or will it create an economic and cultural divide between the wealthy and a struggling, subservient Fort

Bragg community?

These are questions that traditional economic analyses do not consider. In the last several decades, however, many economists have recognized this failure and are creating new areas of economic study including “ecological economics and the economics of happiness.” These new fields of economic research are developing rigorous strategies to analyze the true impacts of our actions. NHUDG wants to take advantage of this new knowledge to do an exhaustive study of the true costs of Georgia Pacific's reuse plan for the mill site and to develop a Mill Site reuse plan that would truly maximize human and planetary well-being. Only this strategy for the reuse of this magnificent site will propel us toward creating a project that can jump-start the maximization of human and planetary well-being and happiness across the earth. ■



Restore Nature First!

—By George Reinhardt

The Noyo Headlands Unified Design Group (NHUDG) identifies environmental restoration, climate change and job creation as the primary drivers for planning on the former G-P Mill Site. The NHUDG *Alternative Plan* reflects our world's new reality. NHUDG is dedicated to creating a diverse, multi-use public/private project that will serve as a model development for communities around the world.

In planning for the reuse it is critical to consider the facts that:

- The world economy is changing dramatically.
- The housing market has collapsed.
- The tourist trade stimulates our local economy, it does little to add living wage jobs.
- Investment in natural capital returns long term benefits.

- Sustainability, food security, and green economic development are viable.
- Renewable energy is the most powerful economic driver and job creator in a world economy that is also sustainable.

Restoration First.

Environmental restoration is the first project to take on after the toxins are cleaned up. In areas deemed clean enough, environmental restoration should begin immediately. Wherever possible this could begin from the east side of the property. For very understandable reasons, including ownership, clean-up and community desires, the work will be starting first along the western edge of the property. Substantial defenses will have to be put in place in order to protect the Coastal Trail from the furious storm run-off and pollution of the property east of the trail. This will require the cooperation of G-P. If properly managed it may actually be possible to start the restoration there, using mechanisms like the sale

of carbon credits. This initial work on G-P's property would include soil building, land forming, tree planting, and stream restoration. This is also the best return on investment our community can make in terms of job creation. NHUDG will be advocating for this approach. And this has an added value of getting the members of the Fort Bragg community back on the land and invested in the success of it's restoration. Issues of environmental and economic justice, climate change, and the quality of our lives demand no less. ■

Noyo Headlands Unified Design Group (NHUDG)
NHUDG is a project of the 501(c)3 Coastal Land Trust. It is dedicated to creating a diverse, multi-use public/private reuse of the Fort Bragg Mill Site that will serve as a model development for communities around the world. More information is available at its website.