



Willits Economic Localization Newsletter

The WELL Bucket

Volume 22, Issue 5

September, October 2026

HARVEST CELEBRATION:

FOOD MATTERS - OCT. 4

- by Laura Toomey Rowland

WELL and the LL Grange will host a gathering to celebrate the end of summer and the bounty of this year's harvest. **Sunday, Oct. 4, 1-4pm** at the Grange. We will have reports from the action groups that grew out of the Town Hall meetings on Food Security at the Grange over the past year. Many have continued working on key areas to strengthen our local food capacity and ability to provide food to our Willits community. Find out about these and how you can participate! (Reports will be near the beginning of the event, so don't be late.)

In addition to information from the action groups, the Harvest Celebration will include entertainment, kid-friendly crafts and food processing demonstrations. At this point, we have lined up apple pressing with apple juice available to take home, bring a jar or purchase one for a donation; acorn processing demonstration; seed saving including how to clean and store seeds for next year - with seeds to take home; winnowing grains demonstration; a Grange garden tour; pumpkin painting; corn doll making; and more in the works.

The event is free of charge; however donation jars will be aplenty and are very appreciated. The monies collected will go to support the efforts of the presenters, the Grange and WELL.

We look forward to sharing the abundance of the season and the wisdom held among our people with you on **October 4, Sunday** afternoon, from 1 to 4.

JOIN WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY AT THE

LOCAL FOOD HARVEST CELEBRATION!

SEED SAVING TECHNIQUES
ACORN PROCESSING DEMONSTRATION
GRANGE GARDEN TOURS

CIDER PRESSING
CORN HUSK DOLL CRAFTING
PUMPKIN PAINTING

UPDATES FROM FOOD SECURITY ACTION GROUPS
LEARN ABOUT LOCAL FOOD PROGRAMS

SUNDAY OCTOBER 4, 2026

1:00 PM to 4:00 PM

LITTLE LAKE GRANGE, WILLITS, CA

Food Pop-Up Oct. 1 & Nov. 5

Mendo Food Network hosts a **FREE Food Pop-up every first Thursday, from 10-11:30am**, at their facility at 1250 Blosser Lane, in Willits. All are welcome! For info: tricia@mendolakefood.org.



Local Candidates Forum

Sept. 20, 2-4pm, At The Grange

WELL is pleased to be one of the co-sponsors/organizers.

A Candidates Forum will be held on **Sunday, Sept. 20**, covering local races for Mendocino County's 3rd District Board of Supervisor, the Willits Unified School District Board, and Willits City Council. The Forum is from 2-4pm at the Little Lake Grange, on School & Pine Streets in Willits.

All of these races will be on the November 3 General Election ballot – along with races for the Governor, 1st District Congressman, other county-wide offices, and 14 State Propositions. Ballots will be mailed to voters on Oct. 5.

The local races featured at the Forum are:

3rd District County Supervisor – a run-off between Buffey Wright Bourassa and Eric Hart to replace John Haschak – starting just after 2:00pm.

WUSD Board – four candidates vying for 3 seats of the board: Nicole Karker, Jeanne King, Paula Nunez, and Mason Neil Rescina – starting about 2:45.

Willits City Council – two candidates, Robin Leler and Sherrie Ebyam, running uncontested for two seats on the Council – will introduce themselves starting about 3:35. (Incumbents Larry Stranske and Bruce Burton are not running for reelection.)

For each of these local races, candidates will have equal time to introduce themselves and answer questions, including some prepared by the sponsors and some submitted by audience members, time permitting.

The Forum will also have available information regarding other important items on the November 3 ballot, including the 14 state-wide propositions.

Co-sponsors of the non-partisan Forum include: Little Lake Grange, League of Women Voters of Mendocino County, Mendocino Women's Political Coalition, and WELL (Willits Economic Localization). Forum moderator will be Denise Jessie.

MENDOCINO COUNTY THIRD DISTRICT

CANDIDATES FORUM

MAKE AN INFORMED CHOICE - KNOW YOUR CANDIDATES!

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 20TH

2 PM - 4 PM

LITTLE LAKE GRANGE, WILLITS

2:00 pm - 3rd DISTRICT COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

★ Eric Hart ★ Buffey Wright Bourassa ★

2:45 pm - WILLITS UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

★ Nicole Karker ★ Jeanne King ★ Paula Nunez ★ Mason Neil Rescina ★

3:45 pm - WILLITS CITY COUNCIL ★ Sherrie Ebyam ★ Robin Leler ★

Ballots will be mailed to voters **OCTOBER 5th**

ELECTION DAY is November 3rd

Voted Best Financial Advisor - Tax Preparer - Accounting Firm

NC Financial Group

A Wealth Management Company

Nicholas Casagrande, EA

CEO & Financial Advisor

nicholas.casagrande@ceterafs.com

Call us today!

(855) 240-6606 | 207 W Stephenson St, Ukiah, CA 95482

(415) 480-3669 | 675 S Main St, Willits, CA 95490

www.ncfinancialgroup.com

Investments | Tax Planning | Insurance | Business Solutions | Retirement

Advisory services offered through Cetera Investment Advisers LLC. Securities offered through Cetera Financial Specialists LLC (doing insurance business in CA as CFGFS Insurance Agency LLC, CA insurance license #0E28878), member FINRA/SIPC. Cetera is under separate ownership from any other named entity.

NC Financial Group 2025 awarded Gold in categories Accounting Firm, Financial Advisor (won prior in 2024), and Tax Prep. The Best of Lake and Mendocino presented by Bicoastal Media is a vote-based contest for individuals and businesses that serve Lake County, CA, and Mendocino County, CA. Nominations are provided by the community and after the nomination period is completed, the names of nominated businesses in each of the categories are finalized and make up the official Best of Lake and Mendocino voting ballot. The audience can then vote on one choice in each category. Voters are allowed to nominate without limits and once the voting period has begun, one vote per category per 24-hour period is allowed. Listing in this publication and/or award is not a guarantee of future investment success. This recognition should not be construed as an endorsement of the advisor by any client. No compensation was provided directly or indirectly by the recipient for participation or in connection with obtaining or using the third-party rating or award.

EA #105394 CA DRE #01854336, CA Insurance Lic. # 0H68496

Willits Indivisible Update

– By Mary Burns And Kate Black

In an effort to deepen our bonds and network with our local neighbors and community groups, here's a little history about Willits Indivisible:

Indivisible (National) was started in 2016 by two congressional staffers – Ezra Klein and Leah Goldberg. They began by sharing a handbook with suggestions for peacefully but effectively resisting the move to the right under the first Trump administration. There are now more than 2,500 Indivisible groups. Willits Indivisible joined in February 2025.

Our first Democracy Vigil was on March 14, 2025. Our leadership team remembered the Willits Peace Vigil that held weekly vigils in response to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and we decided to pick up the banner. Renamed Democracy Vigil, our group has been standing together at Babcock Park every Friday since. It's a hopeful way to find solace during these especially difficult times,

finding yourself in a group of like-minded people full of courage, conviction, and humor. The passing traffic shows us by their many positive honks, waves, and thumbs up that they are encouraged to see us standing up and protesting on a regular basis.

Our vigils are not the only way we network. Our members have donated more than 1,700 pounds of food to the Food Bank. In January, in honor of MLK Day, we donated many bags of warm clothes and blankets which we shared between the Food Bank, Willits Daily Bread, and Community Crossroads. We have a liaison to the local Elections Group, to the City Police, have canvassed for candidates and supported local and state issues, including our very successful postcard writing group that has completed and mailed over 6,000 postcards since January 2026! We hope you'll join our vigils and find out more!

Get Ready for the Super El Niño

– by EPIC

A supercharged system of warm water off the Pacific Coast threatens to offer a wet and stormy winter. This “super” El Niño is likely to be a record-setter, with temperatures already in virtually uncharted territory and months left to continue to climb. Predicting what this super El Niño will do in Northern California is tough but previously strong El Niños—such as 1982-83 and

1997-98—suggest a likely future: one atmospheric river after another, all winter long. And if it wasn't already obvious, climate change is likely a significant contributor to the warm ocean temperatures (although El Niño events are a normal weather pattern).

This is a huge topic but certainly affects us locally. Find out more online!

Library Maker Meetup – Sept. 26

A Maker Meetup is happening on **Saturday, Sept. 26**, noon-4pm at the Willits branch library meeting room. “Build things, fix things, make art, sew, write, grow things – Come hang out! Bring a project, share what you're working on, meet local makers, artists, crafters and doers. From robots & electronics to woodworking, fiber arts, wiring and art – anything you make.” Info: @willitsmakers on facebook.



J.D. REDHOUSE & COMPANY
EST. 2007
A LOCALLY OWNED MERCANTILE

Open daily 10 to 6
 Clothing, Gifts, Housewares, Gourmet Coffee,
 Ice cream, Farm & Garden Supplies, Pet Foods.
 212 S. Main Street, Willits, California 459-1214

Brooktrails 2nd Access Update

– by John Haschak, 3rd District Supervisor

The Mendocino County Department of Transportation gave an update on the Sherwood Road Second Access Route at a special meeting on Aug. 18 at the Brooktrails Community Center. The County is preparing an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the project and wanted to hear what people think should be included in the study. This project is intended to improve emergency access, evacuation routes, and everyday travel. The preferred route follows the Firco Road going from Poppy to near the Apache Mill site north of Willits and then

connecting to the County road north of the Hwy 101 northern interchange.

A timeline was presented. The County has received the funding to do the environmental work and the design work which is where we are now. County staff is actively looking for funding for completion of the project which requires funding for acquiring right of ways and construction. Of course, this won't be completed before my term is over but we have made substantial progress.

More From Brooktrails

– by Rick Williams

BTCSD undertook an investment grade audit of its operations and facilities to find energy resource alternatives and to develop energy efficient solutions for its operations. Unfortunately, the audit was unable to identify a program that penciled out due to the lack of a viable site for solar power generation.

The District is working internally to increase energy and water conservation efficiency at its existing water treatment plant based upon operational and technical upgrades. A water reuse plant for the District is still in the concept stage, with nothing concrete to report yet.

From Climate Action Mendocino:

Rewiring America is a great group that explains and promotes clean energy. A new program to train people to be an Electric Coach and be able to explain electric appliances and their financial benefit for households and businesses starts on Sept. 8. It's free and very flexible so that you can take the course as your time allows. Here's the website for more information and to sign up. <https://view.email.rewiringamerica>.



WHY USE COLD CREEK COMPOST?

- CLOSE THE LOOP
- SAVE MONEY
- REDUCE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT
- GROW MORE

coldcreekcompost.com
(707) 485-5966
@ColdCreekCompost

RECYCLING ORGANICS SINCE 1995

NUTRIENT-PACKED COMPOST, PLANTER MIXES & CUSTOM BLENDS
MADE IN UKIAH, CA



Mendocino and Lake Climate Stewards Course

OCT 3RD – DEC 5TH 2026

This course aims to build hope for our planet's future while gaining practical skills to take meaningful climate action in your community. We combine online learning with hands-on field experiences to understand climate change, earth systems, and local ecosystems.

Join a network of local changemakers working together for climate resilience, no prior experience needed just curiosity and commitment to our region's future.

Discover how YOU can become a local Climate Steward!

40 Educational hours including:

- 8 Online classes on Tuesdays (6–8pm)
- 3 Fieldtrips on Saturdays (Oct 3, 24, and Nov 7)
- 1 Climate Stewardship Capstone Project

Course Fee:
\$175–\$275
Equity pricing
Scholarships available

SIGN UP AND JOIN US!
<https://link.ucanr.edu/climate>

Registration and Info
Laura Garza-Díaz lgarza@ucanr.edu
Hannah Bird hbird@ucanr.edu

CLIMATE STEWARDS
UC Cooperative Extension
University of California
Agriculture & Natural Resources
UC Research & Extension Centers
University of California
Agriculture & Natural Resources

Jackson Forest Latest News

Excerpted and adapted from an article by Roger Coryell, courtesy of MendoVoice.

Jackson Demonstration State Forest bill clears the Legislature, but logging could continue.

AB 2494, brought by state Assemblymember Chris Rogers, D-Santa Rosa, whose district takes in the Mendocino coast, rewrites the mandate that has governed California's demonstration state forests for decades. There are 14 of them, about 85,000 acres in all, according to Cal Fire. Jackson is the largest, 48,652 acres between Willits and Fort Bragg.

Existing law defines managing those forests as achieving "maximum sustained production of high-quality forest products." AB 2494 replaces that with a definition built around biodiversity, carbon storage, climate resilience, recreation, watershed health and wildfire resilience. The bill authorizes the state natural resources secretary to enter into co-management agreements with California tribes.

The Senate and Assembly agreed on amendments and voted approval in late August. The bill is headed to Gov. Gavin Newsom, who has until Sept. 30 to sign or veto it. The bill would take effect Jan. 1, 2027.

What the bill doesn't do is stop a timber harvest plan already on the books. The bill contains no language making it retroactive, no provision addressing plans already approved or under review, and no directions to Cal Fire to revisit them.

Young conifers stand in Jackson Demonstration State Forest near Willits, California

The Environmental Protection Information Center (EPIC), Coalition to Save Jackson and many other groups have supported AB 2494 but are calling for an immediate halt to a 2025 timber harvest plan (THP) called AMEX, which covers nearly 500 acres near Chamberlain Creek. They oppose any further logging in Jackson until the forest's updated management plan, a tribal co-management agreement and the bill are all in place.

You can express your support via Assemblyman Chris Rogers at: assemblymember.rogers@assembly.ca.gov. His staff will relay comments to the Governor's office.



Young conifers stand in Jackson Demonstration State Forest near Willits, California

Fire Safe Council News

We are pleased to announce our new mega-brochure, the latest edition of Living with Wildfire in Mendocino County, which showcases our main services for fire safety in Mendocino County along with a great deal of preparedness guidance. Over time, we've developed more and more resources for local residents. We made a brochure on evacuation planning – then other materials on readiness steps, animal evacuation, Zone 0, smoke, our own programs, etc – and ended up with a lot of little handouts.

To simplify your life and ours, we combined all of them into one handy, more comprehensive resource. Check it out at our website www.firesafemendocino.org in the knowledge center section, or stop by our table at one of many community events to pick up a paper copy.

For more info or to become a member, go to <https://www.firesafemendocino.org>

Claudia Wenning
Quantum Level Health

Holistic Health Consultant
 PhD Natural Medicine, Traditional Naturopath
 Functional Medicine Practitioner, FMP
 707 371 6103 - claudia@claudiawenning.com
www.claudiiawenning.com

Mitigation Lands News & Tours – Sept. 12 & Oct. 10

– by Amy Wolitzer Project Interpreter, MCRCD

The Willits Bypass Mitigation Lands, located in Little Lake Valley, is the largest public wetlands restoration and mitigation project in the State of California. As mitigation for habitat impacted during the building of the Willits Bypass, Caltrans created a permanent source of funding for management and monitoring of 2,087 acres of wet meadow, stream corridors, and oak woodlands. The Mendocino County Resource Conservation District provides on-the-ground land management, monitoring, and monthly public tours.

September 12 Tour: 8:30 AM – 11:30am - Geography of Little Lake Valley: Tectonics, Geomorphology, and Living Landscapes on the Maacama Fracture Zone

This is an opportunity to appreciate the beauty of Little Lake Valley while learning about its tectonic formation and geologic history from an expert geographer. Following our June reminder (earthquake!) that we are on the Maacama Fault, this is a great time to ask all your questions about how this has shaped the area and what can be expected to happen in the future. Participants should be prepared to walk about one mile. Group size is limited -- please RSVP to reserve a spot on this free tour — email amyw@mcrd.org or text (369) 216 9990.

October 10 Tour: Oaks, Acorns, & Woodpeckers

This will be a hike to appreciate some of the biggest oaks on the Willits Bypass Mitigation Lands and learn about many of the creatures that depend on oaks including woodpeckers. We will meet at the Mendocino County Museum for a short introduction and restroom stop and then caravan to Mitigation Lands located near Eastside Road. There we will wander through oak and ash



Group size limited - RSVP required - Email amyw@mcrd.org or text (369) 216 9990

woodlands and talk about whatever we find. If you have binoculars, please bring them; we will have a few pairs for folks to borrow. Participants should be prepared to wander about one mile in an area with undeveloped trails. Terrain is flat, but the ground may be uneven. Group size is limited -- please RSVP to reserve a spot on this free tour — email amyw@mcrd.org or text (369) 216 9990.

Ecology Action Garden Tours

Ecology Action (home of Grow Bio-Intensive) is hosting two Garden Tours this Fall:

Oct. 10 at the Mendocino Heart Beet Mini-Farm

Oct. 11 at the Jeavons Center in Willits.

Both are from 9am-4pm, \$25 per person. Info and registration at growbiointensive.org/tour



Acupuncture Awakens the Healer Within.



Diane Smalley, L.Ac. 456-9514
750 Central Street, Willits

NEARY AND O'BRIEN Attorneys at Law

110 S. Main St., Ste. C Willits, CA 95490
Ph: (707) 459-5551 / Fax: (707) 459-3018
www.nearyobrienlaw.com

Christopher J. Neary / Jennifer M. O'Brien

WELL Website

Our WELL website has a new food resources page. Check out the free food resources in Willits and articles regarding the current work on food security issues. We also have a community events calendar, where you can easily see the events with details around Willits that we encourage you to support. You can also access past editions of our newsletter and see community resources on our resource page. You can look forward to seeing new events, announcements and projects you may want to participate in as these are developed. Visit Well95490.org today.

If there is an event you would like to add to our calendar, or other resources you feel would be helpful, email us at office@well95490.org to see if we can get it posted.

WELL CoCom Summary – July 6, August 10 and August 31, 2026

[Note: Because a number of items were discussed and refined over the past three meetings, for brevity we have combined the main results on each topic.]

Office CleanUp: A twoperson work party cleared nearly a full recycling bin of paper from the WELL office. Remaining tasks include sorting paint and minor organizing. Usable paint may be recycled or offered to community members.

Candidates Forum – September 20: Planning continues for the local Candidates Forum, scheduled for Sunday, Sept. 20, 2–4 PM at the Grange. Races to be featured include the Third District Supervisor runoff, Willits Unified School District Board, and Willits City Council. WELL, Little Lake Grange, and other non-profit, non-partisan groups are co-sponsors of the event. Channel 3 will video and other news outlets will cover it.

Quarter 2 Finance Review: Membership income totaled \$1,125 for Q2. With the expenses for Q2, the quarter ended with a net loss of \$1,005. Christian has streamlined admin processes; current administrative workload is 3–4 hours/month; this will reduce our monthly operating deficit. We've discussed with the board of the Environmental Center possible ways to reduce the financial burden (on both WEC and WELL) of rent at the Hub, perhaps finding another co-renter. Contact the Drells at 459-2643 if you have ideas.

Fiscal Sponsorship – Community Wellness Collective: CoCom approved serving as fiscal sponsor under Model C, with the Community Wellness Collective retaining management. WELL holds a \$5,000 grant for the project, with a proposed 7% administrative fee. Prana will update the MOU to include mission alignment and spending categories.

Website & Communications: Christian updated WELL websites with various events, committee listings, food resources, and completed Google integration to improve search visibility. Events may be submitted via the WELL office email.

Food Security & Fall Event: This is taking shape as a Local Food Harvest celebration, now scheduled for Sunday Oct. 4, 1-4pm at the Grange. Discussions explored a boothstyle skills event (seed saving, canning, medicinal herbs) combined with brief group reports. Laura is coordinating with food security groups, confirming participation, and a planning subcommittee (from WELL and the Grange) is working out details.

Membership Renewals: Renewals will begin in late October, starting with email reminders, followed by biweekly followups. Mail and phone calls will be used as later steps. Christian is exploring monthly autorenewal options for 2027.

Soup Party – December 6: The second annual WELL Soup Party is tentatively scheduled for Sunday, Dec. 6, 4:00–6:30pm. We will present WELL's 2027 goals and 2026 accomplishments and invite members' ideas and involvement.

Newsletter: The Sept.-Oct. edition will be a little late due to Madge and Alyssa's schedules. Next edition will be Nov-Dec., with a deadline approx. Oct. 30th. If you have events or articles to publicize, contact Madge at mstrong827@outlook.com.

Next Meetings: Oct. 5th and Nov. 2, 6:30 pm at the Hub. All are welcome. Contact Madge at 707-810-3423 for info or check our website at well95490.org.



October Events in Willits



RIDGEWOOD RANCH

Harvest Festival

APPLE CIDER DONUTS
APPLE CIDER PRESSING
PUMPKIN PATCH
HAY RIDES
BEER GARDEN
KIDS GAME ZONE
FIRE ENGINE
FARM FRESH FOOD & SNACKS SERVED ALL DAY

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 10
11:00 AM - 4:00 PM • \$5 ADMISSION
RIDGEWOODRANCH.COM



HARVEST MOON Celebration

SAT. OCTOBER 3RD, 2026
4-8PM DOWNTOWN WILLITS, CA

Kick off fall festivities on Main St. in Downtown Willits with a fun, free, family event! Live music, food, shopping, vendors & more!

LIVE MUSIC
5-8PM
SOUL CIRCUS BAND

WHAT IS WELL?

Willits Economic Localization is a 501(c)3 non-profit, membership organization. All donations are tax-deductible.

Our Vision: An enduring local economy that provides health and security for our community.

Our Mission: To foster the creation of a local, sustainable economy in the Willits area by helping residents to learn valuable skills and take action, and by partnering with other organizations to share knowledge and support projects that build a thriving community

WELL Coordinating Committee

Laura Rowland 459-1043

ljtrowland@gmail.com

Madge Strong 459-1493

mstrong827@outlook.com

Prana 834-7224

28prana@gmail.com

Eric Hart 707-234-8634

eric@oakhart.net

Christian Compton 916-613-6152

chris.compton44@icloud.com

There are two vacancies on the Committee, if interested call Madge 459-1493

Memberships are \$35-85 individual or \$50-100 family; Donations are welcome! WELL, PO Box 42, Willits CA 95490

Donate now with..

PayPal

Please join or renew your membership for 2026

WELL Email: office@well95490.org • Website: well95490.org • Phone: (707) 459-1493