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*Rio Dell City Hall  
675 Wildwood Avenue  
Rio Dell, CA 95562  
(707) 764-3532  
cityofriodell.ca.gov*



October 3, 2023

TO: Rio Dell City Council

FROM: Kyle Knopp, City Manager

SUBJECT: Presentation from the Humboldt Area Foundation + Wild Rivers Community Foundation on Resiliency and Recovery in the Eel River Valley Following the December 20, 2022 Ferndale Earthquake

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE CITY COUNCIL:

Receive the presentation and ask questions, if any.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

The Humboldt Area Foundation + Wild Rivers Community Foundation staff will be present to provide a six-month report on the disaster recovery. Ali Lee (Via zoom), Amy Jester, Linda Stansberry and Jarad Petroske will present. Additional long-term recovery representatives from other organizations may also be present.

Attachments: "Resilience and Recovery in the Eel River Valley"

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# Resilience and Recovery in the Eel River Valley



A six-month report on disaster recovery following the Dec. 20, 2022, Ferndale Earthquake







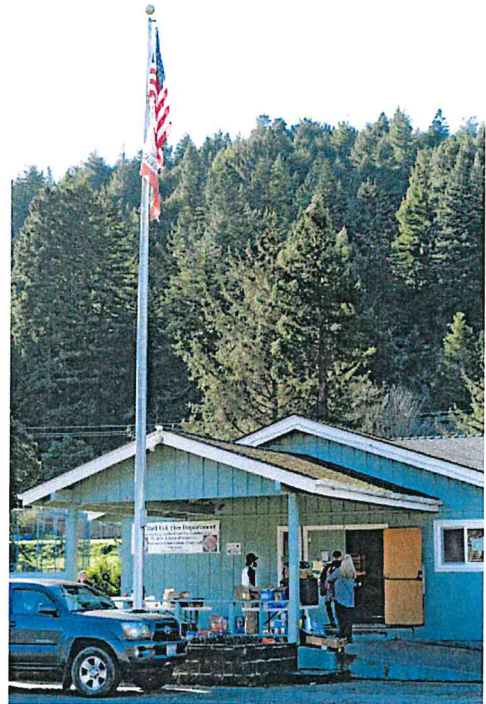
## Introduction

On Dec. 20, 2022, and Jan. 1, 2023, earthquakes, measuring magnitude 6.4 and 5.4 respectively, struck one of California's most beautiful, dynamic yet economically distressed rural regions: Humboldt County's Eel River Valley. Writing in the Eureka Times-Standard, Lori Dengler, professor emerita of Geology from Cal Poly Humboldt, said the Dec. 20 quake produced the third-highest shaking ever recorded in a California earthquake.

According to the Associated Press, the quake left two dead, injured at least 12 people, left thousands without water or power and damaged scores of buildings. The quake is commonly referred to as the Ferndale Quake. While Ferndale, Calif., did receive serious damage, the largest impact struck the people of Rio Dell, Calif. (pop. 3,400). Almost immediately, the Humboldt Area Foundation + Wild Rivers Community Foundation (HAF+WRCF) received reports of residents in need of housing, food, and materials for basic repairs.

While the State of California declared the event a disaster, the federal government did not issue a Presidential Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) declaration for the Ferndale Earthquake. The lack of a federal declaration furthers robust analysis, including by Congress, that FEMA policy is both inequitable in its formulas to assess rural areas while also exacerbating economic disparity. FEMA did, however, address economic disparity on March 8, 2023, by making a declaration (FEMA-4692-DR) for the Bear River Band of the Rohnerville Rancheria Earthquake on Dec. 20, 2022.

As a community foundation dedicated to supporting the four-county region of Humboldt, Del Norte, and Trinity counties in California, and Curry County in Southern Oregon, HAF+WRCF supports disaster response, recovery, and resilience with the Disaster Response & Resilience Fund.



*Volunteers provide food at Rio Dell Fire Department for residents affected by the earthquakes. Photo by James Adam Taylor.*

Within two weeks of the initial Dec. 20 quake, more than \$300,000 in donations poured into the Foundation from individual donors and philanthropic partners. By March 2023, HAF+WRCF announced \$1.2 million was available from the Disaster Relief and Resilience Fund for nonprofit organizations, tribes and government entities helping quake victims. Thanks to generous donors and philanthropic partners, the Foundation has been able to support important partnerships to bolster residents affected by the quakes.

This report highlights the successes and ongoing funding needs identified through the work of the Foundation and its community partners.



## Timeline of Events

- Dec. 20, 2022** | A magnitude 6.4 earthquake strikes off the coast of Ferndale, Calif., severely impacting the City of Rio Dell's housing and businesses.
- Dec. 20, 2022** | HAF+WRCF's Community Response Team begins response efforts.
- Dec. 20, 2022** | Gov. Gavin Newsom proclaims state of emergency for Humboldt County.
- Jan. 1, 2023** | A magnitude 5.4 earthquake strikes the same region, further damaging Ferndale's main bridge and regional wastewater systems.
- Jan. 5, 2023** | County of Humboldt establishes the Earthquake Recovery Line, closes congregate shelters, and opens non-congregate shelters.
- Jan. 9, 2023** | Senator Mike McGuire, Assemblymember Jim Wood, California Office of Emergency Services, California Department of Housing & Community Development host Virtual Town Hall announcing \$3 million in aid for affected residents.
- Jan. 12, 2023** | County of Humboldt reports quake damage is unlikely to meet threshold for federal emergency declaration.
- Feb. 10, 2023** | Small Business Association (SBA) approves \$5 million in federal disaster loans.
- March 5, 2023** | HAF+WRCF announces \$1.2 million in quake recovery funds.
- March 8, 2023** | Federal Government declares a disaster for the Bear River Band of the Rohnerville Rancheria and FEMA-4692-DR is activated.
- March 17, 2023** | Humboldt Eel River Long-term Recovery Group is stood-up by Hope Crisis Response Network, HAF+WRCF, County of Humboldt, and City of Rio Dell: [www.humboldtrecovey.org](http://www.humboldtrecovey.org)
- March 2023** | Habitat for Humanity Yuba/Sutter signs agreement with the County of Humboldt to address housing needs of renters and income property owners, primarily in Rio Dell, due to the earthquakes.
- April 19, 2023** | Disaster Case Management begins in Rio Dell, providing Humboldt earthquake recovery for individuals with "Unmet Individual Needs" in collaboration with the Humboldt LTRG
- May 23-24, 2023** | California Office of Emergency Services Seismic Safety Commission holds hearings in Rio Dell.





# Situation Summary

The County of Humboldt's and City of Rio Dell's response and current recovery processes have relied on creative solutions for leveraging resources, community collaborations, volunteers, and in-kind and monetary donations. Despite both the good work and good will, gaps exist mostly around housing repairs and housing replacements.

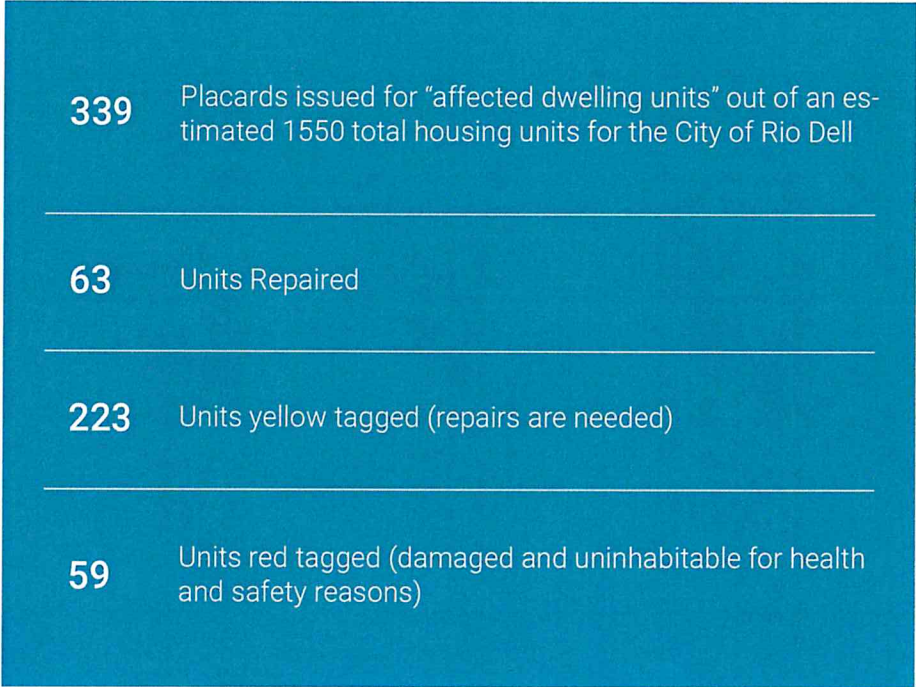
## Housing

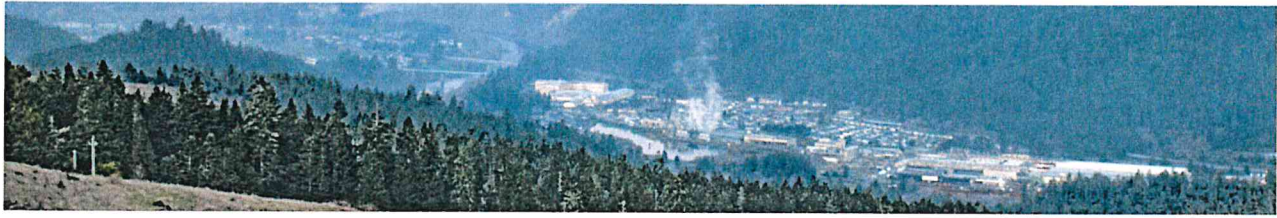
Both earthquakes and their aftershocks prompted evacuations for renters and homeowners due to unsafe living conditions. The earthquakes left the Eel River Valley communities emotionally shaken and mentally strained. Extreme winter storm events that followed the quakes layered on stressors and damages as earthquake evacuees sheltered at family and friends' homes, and at local motels thanks to aid from the County of Humboldt's housing voucher program and grants from the Foundation.

## Earthquake Recovery Dashboard

The County of Humboldt's Office of Emergency Services established the 2022 December Earthquake Recovery Dashboard and regularly updates with new information.

As of June 14, 2023, nearly six months after the first earthquake:





## Assessing Long-Term Recovery

**In March, 2023**, the Humboldt Eel River Valley Long Term Recovery Group (LTRG) formed as a cooperative body made up of representatives from many faith-based, nonprofit, government, business, and other organizations working in local communities to assist individuals and families.

The Long-Term Recovery Group includes the following organizations:

- Arcata Economic Development Corporation
- Arcata House Partnership
- Area 1 Agency on Aging
- Centro del Pueblo
- Changing Tides Family Services
- City of Rio Dell
- Coast Central Credit Union
- County of Humboldt Office of Emergency Services
- Episcopal Diocese of Northern California
- Food for People, the Food Bank for Humboldt County
- Foggy Bottom Boys
- Habitat for Humanity
- Hope Crisis Response Network
- Humboldt Area Foundation + Wild Rivers Community Foundation
- Humboldt Redwood Group
- Humboldt Made
- LatinoNet's Promotores
- McLean Foundation
- North Coast Grantmaking Partnership
- Paso a Paso (Providence St. Joseph Hospital)
- Redwood Lumber & Supply Company
- Redwood Region Economic Development Commission
- RH Construction
- Rio Dell Community Resource Center
- Rio Dell-Scotia Chamber of Commerce
- St. Alban's Episcopal Church
- St. Francis Episcopal Church
- United Policyholders



*Vasu Singhania participates in food distribution to community members. Photo by James Adam Taylor*



*Food for People staff and volunteers distribute emergency foods in Rio Dell and Fortuna*

While the Foundation supports nonprofit organizations and groups doing charitable work with the Disaster Response and Resilience Fund, the Disaster Case Management team addresses individual unmet needs regarding the recent earthquakes.



## Disaster Case Management

**Beginning April 17, 2023**, case workers trained in Disaster Case Management by Catholic Charities of the Santa Rosa Diocese began receiving referrals and conducting intake assessments—sometimes meeting at the Rio Dell Community Resource Center and sometimes meeting closer to where people have temporarily moved outside the Eel River Valley. Case workers meet with residents to assess unmet needs with the goal of restoring and stabilizing residents' lives as quickly as possible.

The bilingual (Spanish and English) DCM Team can be reached at 707-382-5890, Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

(Source: <https://humboldt.gov/3379/2022-Earthquake-Recovery>)

*HAF+WRCF Senior Program Officer Holly Hensher delivers emergency supplies to Rio Dell community members.*



## Looking Forward

**HAF+WRCF continues to be a part of the Humboldt LTRG** and the earthquake recovery process to help address community gaps as they arise. With Centro del Pueblo and Think Place, the Humboldt LTRG is planning a bilingual Spanish and English community visioning as part of assembling the disaster recovery puzzle. The gathering will be a time for sharing and imagining Rio Dell's future after the earthquakes.

Disaster recovery is a process that can take anywhere from one year to many years. It's a process that requires continued patience, creative solutions, and hard work together. More community collaboration is essential for the recovery journey.

*HAF+WRCF Policy Director Amy Jester and Food for People's Operation Manager Jose Mendez drop off storm support supplies to Mattole Valley Family Resource Center.*



## Funding Overview and Partnership

By end of February 2023, HAF+WRCF granted over \$500,000 in earthquake response efforts. In March, HAF+WRCF set aside \$1.2 million from its Disaster Response, Recovery, and Resiliency Fund to support recovery in Rio Dell, Calif., and surrounding communities in the Eel River Valley.

Below are a few grant highlights:

### Jan. 2023

\$50,000 to Humboldt Made, \$2,489 to the Mattole Valley Resource Center, and \$5,000 to Pay it Forward Humboldt for immediate disaster response.

### Feb. 2023

\$13,000 to Pay It Forward Humboldt for disaster recovery work, including meeting critical needs for vulnerable evacuees.

### Apr. 2023

\$360,000 to the Hope Crisis Response Network (HCRN) for reconstruction of owner-occupied homes damaged by the quake. Work is being done in conjunction with Rhyen Heussler of RH Construction. Simultaneously, renters and income property owners are working with Habitat for Humanity for repair and relocation assistance. Habitat for Humanity's work is not funded by the Foundation.

\$30,000 to the Humboldt Eel River Valley Long-Term Recovery Group (LTRG) to support recovery efforts.

### May 2023

\$388,000 to the Arcata House Partnership to support the organization's bi-lingual (Spanish-English) Disaster Case Management Team. Arcata House Partnership works with Changing Tides Family Services, Pay It Forward Humboldt, and the Humboldt Eel River Valley LTRG to provide support for individual unmet needs.

### June 2023

\$25,000 for the Humboldt Community Organizations Active in a Disaster (COAD) to support the group's disaster resilience efforts.

\$3,000 to the Humboldt Eel River Valley LTRG to continue supporting the group's recovery efforts.



Thank you to the many donors and philanthropic partners who made these grants possible.

Amalgamated Foundation

California Wellness Foundation

Coastal Community Foundation of South Carolina

Evelyn & Walter Haas Jr. Fund

GlobalGiving

Humboldt Health Foundation

James Irvine Foundation

Marin Community Foundation

National Philanthropic Trust

Sacramento Region Community Foundation

Sierra Health Foundation

Silicon Valley Community Foundation

The California Endowment

Two Anonymous Foundations

## About the Disaster Response & Resilience Fund

The Disaster Response & Resilience Fund supports residents of Humboldt, Trinity, Del Norte, and Curry counties, as well as adjoining Tribal lands during current and future disasters, including public health emergencies such as the COVID-19 pandemic, fires, earthquakes, flooding, and other natural and man-made disasters. Grants support non-profit organizations, public benefit organizations (including churches, educational organizations/schools, hospitals, government units, tribal governments, etc.), groups working with a qualified fiscal sponsor, and other organizations and groups working on charitable projects. There is no written application process required. Organizations in need can call or email to get connected to a Program Officer. Access can also be found on the online Grants Portal.

You can support the Disaster Response & Resilience Fund here: [www.hafoundation.org/disaster](http://www.hafoundation.org/disaster)



## Contacts

For grant and other Community Solutions information, please contact our Community Solutions and Programs staff:

**Craig Woods** [craigw@hafoundation.org](mailto:craigw@hafoundation.org)

For Philanthropic Partners, please contact our Advancement & Philanthropic Innovation staff:

**Keytra Meyer** [keytram@hafoundation.org](mailto:keytram@hafoundation.org)

**Maria Vanderhorst** [mariav@hafoundation.org](mailto:mariav@hafoundation.org)

For individual donors, please contact our Donor Relations & Development staff:

**Laurel Dalsted** [laureld@hafoundation.org](mailto:laureld@hafoundation.org)

**Lindsey Zito** [lindseyz@hafoundation.org](mailto:lindseyz@hafoundation.org)

For media inquiries, please contact our Marketing & Communications staff:

**Jarad Petroske** [jaradp@hafoundation.org](mailto:jaradp@hafoundation.org)

**Scott Graves** [scottg@hafoundation.org](mailto:scottg@hafoundation.org)

**Marsh Heartwells** [marshh@hafoundation.org](mailto:marshh@hafoundation.org)

*Photos courtesy of James Adam Taylor, made possible through the support of HCAOG and the REAP Grant. Cover photo by Kevin LoMiglio.*



[hafoundation.org](http://hafoundation.org) | [wrcf.org](http://wrcf.org)  
(707) 442-2993 | (707) 465-1238