



Willits Economic Localization Newsletter

The WELL Bucket

Volume 18, Issue 4

July/August, 2022

GREEN UPRISING FARM & GARDEN TOUR

Saturday, July 16th , 10am to 2pm - by Sara Grusky



Please join us for a farm tour that will take you through the many facets of our family farm including the vegetable gardens, the medicinal herb garden, the goat herd, high caloric storage crops (dry corn, beans, squashes), and fruit trees, berries, and grapes. The entire tour will be steeped in firsthand experiences, funny stories of successes and failures, perspectives gained from water shortages, well-drilling failures, deepening respect for perennials and drought-tolerant varieties, goat escapades, food preservation adventures, and our growing enthusiasm for low-tech creek restoration endeavors. As we tour each garden we will be harvesting the bounty (herbs for a big pot of tea, greens for salad and pesto, fruits and culinaries to infuse our goat cheese and kefir) and during the final hour we will feast

on all of these mid-summer offerings while enjoying each others company. The farm is located at 2301 East Hill Road, Willits. Space may be limited so call or text 707 216-5549 for reservations.

Next Tours:

Aug. 13, 9am-noon: Ridgewood Ranch, Golden Rule Gardens, New Agrarian Collective, and Headwaters Meats. Contact Eric: ericbueyrn@gmail.com

Aug. 13, 11am-3pm, Fortunate Farm open house, Caspar. This tour is sponsored by the Mendocino Herb Guild. Contact Karin: coastherbguild@gmail.com.

TOWN HALL MEETING (By [Zoom](#)) WITH JOHN HASCHAK

Thursday Aug 4, 2022 7 PM

The public is invited to ask questions and comment in dialog with Third District Supervisor John Haschak on issues facing our community and the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors.



Join Zoom Meeting:

<http://tinyurl.com/Haschak-Town-Hall-8-4-22>

Or email mstrong@willitsonline.com or

call (707)459-1493 for other options to join this meeting.

Hosted by WELL (Willits Economic Localization)

LOCAL FOOD SECURITY BRAINSTORMING – by Michael Foley

Green Uprising Farm and the School of Adaptive Agriculture announce the initial meeting of a Task Force on (Re-)Creating Sustainable, Local, Land-Based Economies in our region. With the crises of our times multiplying and showing no signs of easing, we have to look to local action to provide our communities with the resilience they need. What can the City of Willits or the City of Ukiah do to ensure food security for their areas? What sorts of businesses need nurture and support to undergird a truly resilient economy? What can the County do to sustain local farms, watershed restoration, and healthy forestry practices with real economic benefits for the region? What can citizens and businesses do to further the goals of food security, local economic development, and environmental stewardship?

Local government will have to set priorities and advance policies that promote food security for all, encourage the growth of relevant businesses, and provide incentives for ordinary citizens to take action among themselves. Concerned citizens can promote sound policy, organize their neighbors, grow their own food, raise funds, and more. If you are interested to move beyond shuffling deck chairs on the Titanic and exasperated with the politics of denial, please join us to hash out the possibilities and chart courses of action.

Our first meeting will be held at Green Uprising Farm, 2301 East Hill Road, Willits at **4pm on Saturday, July 23rd**. If you are interested in more information, or for directions, call Michael Foley at 707 510-7473.



*Painted by
Helen Falandes*

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Contact Lisa Montez
by email:

lisalynnmm@gmail.com



NOT JUST COWBOY POETRY – JULY 16

Emandal Farm is once again hosting the “Not Just Cowboy Poetry” event, on Sat. July 16, 2pm. The event features music by Kristyn Harris (Western Entertainer of the Year), and live and silent auction (led by auctioneer Rachel Britten). Bring your own food & drinks, spread them on the lawn in the shade, and enjoy! The auction is a benefit for Willits Senior Center, and ticket sales benefit your choice of six local groups: Willits Daily Bread, Willits Kids Club, Friends of the Library, SPACE, Willis High Decathlon Team, and Peregrine Audubon Society. Tickets can be purchased at emandal.com/cowboy-poetry. For more info, contact tamara@emandal.com.



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WILLITS WATER ISSUES - Update - by Madge Strong

Updating from our last WELL newsletter, the two City of Willits reservoirs (Centennial and Morris) are still nearly full as of July 1. Back on April 13 the City Council approved the "Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration" and an "Operational Use Plan" (OUP) for improvements at the City's supplemental groundwater system, drawing from the Elias well (about one mile north of the Wastewater Treatment Plant).

On June 8 the Council approved the actual project, consisting of replacing 3,600 feet of pipe from the Elias well to the treatment plant, upgrading from a 30HP to a 40HP pump at the well, and a second phase adding a 250,000 gallon clear-water holding tank at the treatment plant. Construction is expected over summer.

Latest Developments:

Elias Well Usage: The Council's approval of the OUP limited use of the Elias well only to specific circumstances, i.e. emergencies, fire-fighting, repairs, annual flushing operations, or routine maintenance, with a maximum average of 9 million gallons per month. The staff document, however, allows an average of 9 mg/m over the whole year, or up to XX acre feet annually, not limited to the specified circumstances. This policy will be reviewed at a Water Committee meeting – open to the public – tentatively set for July 19, 11am at City Hall and then brought back to City Council, possibly on July 27.

This is important because, although the IS/MND was adopted without a specific caution about potential impacts of extensive draw-down at the well, the public and Council members were clearly concerned. For example, could heavy use cause infiltration of arsenic-contaminated nearby aquifers into the 'clean' water at Elias?

Park Well: The Park well supplies untreated non-potable water, to be used only for landscape, construction and agricultural purposes. As previously reported, use of this well has increased dramatically: from 1 million gallons in 2019, to 8mg in 2020, to over 11mg in 2021. At its Apr. 27, 2022, meeting, the City Council directed that trucking water from the Park well will be closed during certain hours due to traffic & safety concerns during sporting activities and to reduce mid-night noise. No new trucking permits will be issued except for specified construction projects. Eventually staff envisions developing a master plan to address traffic & parking at the whole recreation complex.

The City is also committed to regular monitoring of water quality and any impacts on nearby wells from both Elias and Park wells.

UKIAH TAKES CLIMATE ACTION – by Judy Luria

Climate Action Mendocino (CAM) is pleased to announce that the Ukiah City Council has passed a Climate Emergency Resolution (CER) and a list of accompanying actions. It addresses energy use, transportation, greenhouse gas drawdown, solid waste, land and water use and more. The CER is the result of several years of work by CAM, consulting with local groups, and ultimately collaborating with City officials. This resolution will guide the City of Ukiah as we do our part to reverse the climate crisis and create a just and liveable future. The cities of Sonoma county (all of which passed their own CERs) were an inspiration to us, as we hope to inspire others to take action.

[NOTE: Madge Strong, WELL Chair and a Willits City Council member, has asked Willits to review its climate policies and to consider further action steps.]



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MITIGATION LANDS UPDATE & TOUR – by Marisela de Santa Ana



Bobcat ~ found in Little Lake Valley

We have been busy with so many things here! Collecting seeds for planting projects, invasive plant removal, bird surveys for mowing areas, mowing, mowing and more mowing, overseeing grazing contracts as the cows are back on the pastures, with this comes checking our water troughs and wells regularly, wildlife surveys and botanical surveys, setting wildlife cams and writing the blog, conducting regular tours, and that is not all of the things. Two of our partners, California Division of Fish and Wildlife and Water Quality come out for visits and assessments, we monitor stream habitat and temperature for fish, check on amphibian and reptile populations, and watch for pig activity.



Anise Swallowtail butterfly, Papilio zelicaon on late spring flowers.

My blogs are a good way to keep in touch with what is happening in terms of wildlife and plants and sometimes I do report on the projects.

Our next walk is on July 23rd and there is a 15-person limit as I have found 20 plus just too many folks to really be cohesive and informative. Please RSVP at marisela@mcrcl.org and visit our website mcrcl.org where we are found under Land Stewards.

WILLITS AREA CYCLISTS UNVEIL NEW KIOSK

At a recent picnic event, Willits Area Cyclists (WAC) unveiled the new informational kiosk just inside the gates to the Brooktrails Township Parcourse. The beautifully crafted redwood kiosk shows the various routes and access-points for walking and bike-riding trails, including maps, rules, and safety measures. The map was a project of the Brooktrails Recreation Committee. WAC will also add a bulletin board and intends to host a monthly trail day, in addition to their monthly meetings. For more info, go to Willits Area Cyclists Facebook page.



**39th Annual Round Valley
Blackberry
Festival**
August 20-21, 2022

Saturday
10am - 6pm
Sunday
10am - 5pm



The Round Valley Blackberry Festival is planned to return for the 39th year this August 21 and 22 in Covelo. The Festival is free, but organizers have launched a fundraiser to assist with the costs of planning and hosting the volunteer run event. The fundraiser is hosted [at this GoFundMe site](#) and has a goal of \$5,000.

WEST CENTER NEWS – by Alison DeGrassi



West Business Development has just wrapped up its StartUp Mendocino 2022 business accelerator program. This no-cost 23-week business training program kicked off in January and ended on June 9, 2022. Its goal is to give local entrepreneurs with great ideas the opportunity to participate in an intensive training program to spark new thinking about what is possible for their business, their community, and the economy of Mendocino County.

Among the 13 graduates receiving a diploma of completion is Tara Bluecloud, owner of Bluecloud Botanicals, a Willits business that provides organic herbal products and customized wellness programs, specializing in women's health issues.

[Paraphrases from DeGrassi's interview:] Tara reports she was inspired by learning organizational tools and systems to track progress, how to plan ahead. She hopes to increase revenue and have online courses to spend less time on in-person consultations. She especially appreciates on-going support from West Center.

You can find Tara's products and make consultation appointments at her website: www.bluecloudbotanicals.com.

West Center looks forward to welcoming participants for the StartUp Mendocino 2023 program. Keep up to date with dates and developments at: www.westcenter.org/programs/startup-mendo. And if you're ready to get your business off the ground, call us today at 707-964-9010 or sign up at www.westcenter.org!

SUMMER ART WALKS IN WILLITS

Eight arts-related organizations hosted an Art Walk on June 25th – the first of a series on the last Saturday of each month through October. Next Art Walks will be July 30th and Aug. 27th, from 5-8pm.

The groups participating include Willits Center for the Arts; the Mendocino County Museum; BACE (Beyond a Common Experience); Scoops Ice Cream, Deli & Catering; Kemmy's Pies; Shanachie Pub; Art in the Plaza; and Re-Evolution. They seek to entice people to come explore the creativity throughout our Willits businesses, museums and galleries (an important part of our local economy!). Plan to spend the evening enjoying art, history, music and dance. More info at www.willitscenterforthearts.org.

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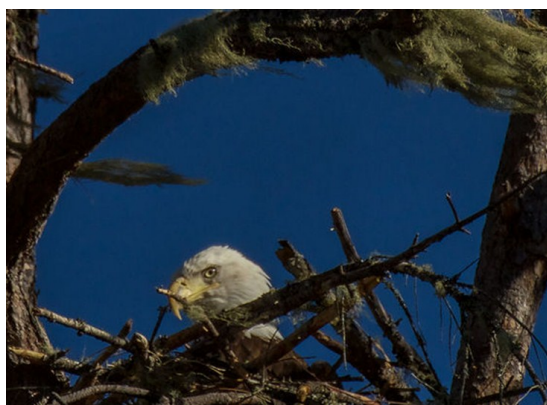
WILDFIRE PREPAREDNESS

A recent notice from our Assemblymember Jim Wood warns us that “Wildfire Preparedness is Year Round!” He notes that “we can all play a role in making our homes and businesses safer. Make a plan for you, your family and your animals. Make an evacuation kit including essential papers and medications. Sign up for alerts, ensure everyone in your household knows your designated meeting place, and always follow evacuation orders. Visit readyforwildfire.org - it's one of the best websites to help you prepare for, prevent and take action in case of a wildfire.”

In Mendocino County, our Fire Safe Council (MCFSC) has received a total of \$3.5 million in grants to allocate over the next three years. The funding will be used to complete the environmental review process for many fuels-reduction, shaded fuel break, and prescribed-fire projects. MCFSC has developed a county-wide strategic plan, reviewing 57 major project areas to guide this year's actions. Among the priorities: 1) Maintain the County Coordinator; 2) Expand residential defensible space programs; 3) Expand home evaluations & home hardening assistance; 4) Replicate the Micro-Grant projects.

For more info, go to: <https://firesafemendocino.org/>

PG&E TREE-CUTTING THREAT – by Ellen Faulkner



*Bald Eagle in Nest Threatened by PG&E.
Photo by Faith Rigolosi.*

PG&E threatens to cut down a tree with an eagle's nest in it as part of their “enhanced vegetation management program” of clear-cutting under the power lines. The company calls this “fire suppression” but that assertion is strongly contested. This tree is in Potter Valley, but similar disputes have affected hundreds of other county landowners.

The eagles have used this nest for many years. They have successfully raised another young eagle this year. This is one of four eagle nest trees in Mendocino County. Months ago, PG&E crews arrived to cut the eagle nest tree down but were prevented from doing so by courageous citizens. Now the company has threatened to cut power to the landowner unless they're willing to pay about \$300,000 to underground the lines.

Is this tree actually a fire threat? The arborist has suggested it is not. The landowner has installed a fire suppression system near the tree. Given the

ecological importance of the tree, the arborist has recommended that the tree be spared. Yet PG&E seems intent on cutting the tree down on August 1st.

The people who live near the eagle nest tree know and love these eagles. The eagles seem to reciprocate. If you would like to help the people, eagles, and the environment please contact Ellen at 707-272-8061 or 485-5867.

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ALL LOGGING IN JACKSON FOREST ON HOLD! – by Naomi Wagner

CalFire has been fought to a standstill (nonviolently, of course). The Board of Forestry has placed all logging and road building activities, in fact *all* activities, in the nearly 50,000-acre Jackson Demonstration State Forest (JDSF) on an indefinite “hold”, while planning for an entirely new form of Tribal co-management with the State evolves.

How did this happen, and with nary a lawsuit filed? It is, in fact, the outcome of astute leadership by the Coyote Valley Band of Pomo Indians combined with non-stop nonviolent direct action, massive multi-generational community involvement, and a creatively powerful State-wide outreach campaign with a focus on elected representatives.

Last year at this time, the battle was raging. On June 10th, 2021, a tree sitter in the huge, old redwood named “Mama Tree” awakened to the sounds of chainsaws and heavy thuds in the forest around him as logging in the highly contested Caspar 500 timber harvest plan (THP) began. Earth First! activists and community members, trail hikers and bikers rushed to the woods attempting to save the trees they loved. People formed pre-dawn human-chain blockades at logging gates and set up a permanent Action Camp.

The Coalition to Save Jackson Forest had formed by April 2021, led by Coyote Valley and including the Mendocino Trail Stewards, the grass roots legal foundation EPIC. (Environmental Information and Protection Center), Mendocino County Youth for Climate and many other environmentalists. The Coalition has consistently called for a full Moratorium on all logging and road building in Jackson until a new Management Plan could replace the woefully outdated, pro-logging approach in use by CalFire to both propose and approve THPs.

Protests continued into 2022, while Government to Government consultations were conducted between Coyote Valley, a Sovereign Nation, and the State of California, staving off logging on a week-to-week basis. Finally, in June 2022, a written edict from the Board of Forestry declared an indefinite “Hold” on “all logging and road building activities” in Jackson.

Now the Coalition to Save Jackson is pressing for co-management, subject to Tribal approval, under an entirely new mandate, transforming the current primary mission of timber production to a Preserve based on traditional ecological knowledge, reverence, restoration and recreation. This new mandate will stop the ongoing desecration of Indigenous sacred sites caused by logging and will protect the forest as an invaluable ecological treasure.

CalFire could never quite say “moratorium” but a success by any other name would smell as sweet.



Aug. 26, 2021 - Jackson Advisory Group aka the "JAG" Shutdown. Activists call for Moratorium on logging in the People's Forest

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ELECTIONS (JUNE & NOVEMBER) – by Madge Strong

The June 7 Primary Election is behind us, with some interesting local results (see below). We are now approaching the important mid-term election on Nov. 8.

Among other items on the November ballot will be two seats on the Willits City Council. The terms of Larry Stranske and Greta Kanne expire at the end of the year; it's not yet known if either will run for re-election. (The other three Council members - Gerry Gonzales, Saprina Rodriguez and myself - have two more years on our terms.) Only residents within City limits are eligible to run or to vote for these positions.

There will also be three seats up on the **Brooktrails CSD Board** for re-election (those of Rick Williams, Tony Orth and Ed Horrick) plus school board and other local district members.

The deadline to file as a candidate is August 12. If one or more incumbents do not file, the deadline is extended to Aug. 17. Contact County elections office for more info.

Mendocino County voters will also likely be deciding on two sales tax measures on the November ballot: a ¼ cent sales tax to fund the County libraries, placed on the ballot by a successful citizens' initiative; and another ¼ cent sales tax to increase funding for fire fighting & emergency preparedness, that the Board of Supervisors recently proposed. Both take advantage of the fact that the ½ cent Measure B, mental health special tax, expires at the end of this year, so there would be no net increase in sales tax. We'll have details in the next newsletter.

In addition, there will be run-offs for many statewide and national offices in November, including Governor, U.S. Senator, congressman, state senator, and assemblymember. (Although these positions were all on the primary ballot in June, those offices are subject to run-offs of the top two candidates.) There will also likely be dozens of state ballot measures.

Meanwhile, what happened locally on June 7?

Almost 60 people attended the Candidates Forum on May 15 in Willits, most in person at the LL Grange. Here are results for the three races covered at that forum:

For the office of County Superintendent of Schools, incumbent Michele Hutchins was challenged by Nicole Glentzer. Glentzer won that office with 55% of the vote.

For the 3rd District Board of Supervisors position, incumbent John Haschak was challenged by Clay Romero. Haschak won re-election with about 73% of the vote.

Here are links to videos of these two segments of the forum: Supervisor Candidates: <https://youtu.be/-KTJJv2-cBc> and Superintendent of Schools Candidates: <https://youtu.be/FIOG2ZWdggwQ>.

For the Sheriff position, Matt Kendall was unopposed on the ballot. Unfortunately he did not attend the forum, nor did he respond to questions submitted to him afterward, on issues such as attaining racial & gender diversity in the force and citizen advisory oversight. There was a late-filing write-in challenger, Trent James, but Kendall easily won re-election with about 86% of the votes.

In other Mendocino County races on the June 7 ballot, most were uncontested and won re-election (with no run-off in November).

Overall, voter turnout was 42%..

WELL was pleased to be a sponsor of the May 15 forum, along with co-sponsors Little Lake Grange, Mendocino Women's Political Coalition and League of Women Voters of Mendocino. Also thanks to Sherrie Ebyam for moderating, our planning team and many volunteers. We will likely host another forum in advance of the November election.

ADVANCED ENERGY CENTER TOURS – by Suzanne Pletcher

Sonoma Clean Power's Advanced Energy Center in Santa Rosa showcases state-of-the-art ways to save energy! Recently re-opened, they are hosting a tour on Fri. July 8 for interested public from Ukiah and Willits, organized by a group from Climate Action Mendocino. There might still be places in the carpools meeting promptly Friday at 9:45am at Raley's, returning about 2pm. Please contact Suzanne Pletcher, pletcherconsult@gmail.com or (707) 489-1325. Also contact Suzanne to be on a list for other tours in the near future!

WELL CoCom Summaries – May & June, 2022

May 12, 2022, noon at the Hub

We planned some tabling times at Farmers Market and the Gleaners plant sale, including collecting signatures on the library sales tax petitions.

Everything is in order for the 5/15 Candidates Forum. (See Election article this issue.)

Lisa reported that we have 139 current members; 23 non-renewed from 2021, and 27 non-renewed from 2020. We still seek to renew all members, but we also want to be pro-active on outreach for new members. Continue tabling at events, esp. when we have a new newsletter and/or event to promote.

We reviewed finances to date: Income is \$1,275 from memberships; \$250 extra donations; \$480 ad sales; and \$662 fiscal sponsor fees from School of Adaptive Ag for total income **\$2,667**. Expenses are \$375 contract services (newsletter & data mgt); \$166 postage; \$800 rent; \$27 posters & \$263 newsletter printing; and \$500 liability insurance, for total expense of **\$2,368**. Net is about **\$300 in the black** – but note that the fiscal sponsor income is not recurring; and on the other hand, we’ve paid insurance for the whole year. We’re doing OK!

The committee planning a Power forum in June decided to postpone (possibly to Spring 2023) due to unavailability of some key presenters. CoCom brainstormed an idea to revive the ‘Waste Not’ forum (planned right when Covid hit). This could be simple if done by Zoom with a few key speakers, or we might consider a larger event that could include reusing & recycling materials and a Maker Fair, in conjunction with other groups and events. We’ll review at next CoCom.

June 23, 2022, noon at the Hub

We checked in about Lyn’s beautiful new house and Madge’s recovery-in-progress from her hip surgery. We note that some housekeeping items (e.g. renewals, banking) are still pending. Madge is gathering and/or writing articles for the next newsletter.

We continued discussion of future program ideas, possibly simpler versions of either the Power forum and/or the “Waste Not” forum. We will contact key players for both ideas and bring this back to the next CoCom. Also need to consider Covid-safe venues if in-person and tech support if doing hybrid. [Note: It appears we may revive a Power forum for Sept. 22 – more later.]

Next meetings: Mon. July 11, 7pm and Mon. Aug. 8, 7pm via Zoom. All are welcome to attend. Contact Madge for the links. Note we’re also still looking to fill CoCom vacancies.

NEW SOLAR PROJECT TO SUPPLY CLEAN ELECTRICITY

- by Suzanne Pletcher

A new solar and battery storage project on 75 acres near an electrical substation in Sonoma County will boost Mendocino and Sonoma counties’ supply of local renewable electricity upon expected completion in mid-2024.

The 11.6 megawatt project, contracted by Sonoma Clean Power in a power purchase agreement with San Diego-based renewable energy developer Luminia, includes solar photovoltaic panels and 32 megawatt-hours of lithium-ion battery storage that can distribute solar power across the grid during peak evening hours.

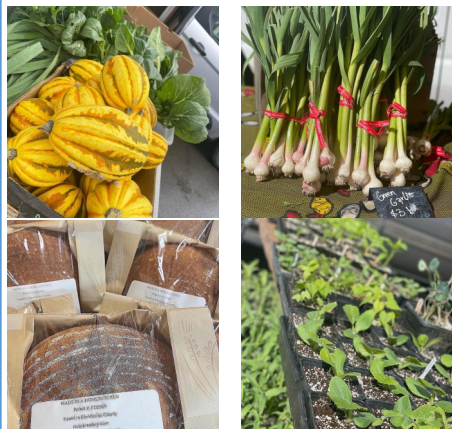
“With this solar and storage project, we can provide renewable energy on-demand, regardless of the time of day, and promote 100% carbon-free energy generated locally,” said Deb Emerson, managing director of procurement for Sonoma Clean Power.

Electricity from the project is earmarked for the public power provider’s EverGreen customers throughout Mendocino and Sonoma counties. More than 3,800 of Sonoma Clean Power’s customers pay a slight premium for EverGreen electricity produced by 100% local renewable energy, and demand is increasing.

Mendocino County supervisors voted unanimously last Aug. 3 to switch electricity service for its eligible buildings to EverGreen as part of its Carbon-Free Mendocino County resolution.

Emerson said that EverGreen is the only electric generation service in California that is truly renewable 24/7. EverGreen electricity comes from solar and geothermal power generated locally in Sonoma and Mendocino counties.

**Willits Farmers Market
Downtown Location
is at the parking lot
next to Old Rexall
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3 to 5:30 pm,
rain or shine.**



WELL Coordinating Committee

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*There are 3 vacancies on the
Committee, call Madge 459-1493*

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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.

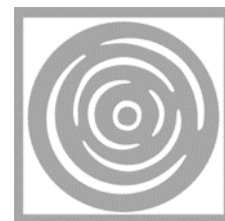
Our Mission: To foster the creation of a local, sustainable economy in the Willits area by helping residents to learn valuable skills and take action, and by partnering with other organizations to share knowledge and support projects that build a thriving community

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