

Board approves cleanup effort on parcel near Walmart

April 18, 2023



The Del Norte County Board of Supervisors directed county maintenance to clear overgrowth on a vacant county-owned parcel east of Walmart on Washington Boulevard.

The effort to remediate this long-standing problem was initiated by 2nd District Supervisor Valerie Starkey. Walmart management has long complained of homeless occupation on this parcel.

Starkey shared with her colleagues that she participated in a March 25 volunteer cleanup effort. Over the last decade, several projects to remove trash have been conducted by Take a Bite out of Blight.

Starkey and fellow volunteers removed a reported 1,600 pounds of debris on the parcel, which is obscured from public view by vegetative overgrowth, recessed in a 20 feet deep cavern.

Since the cleanup, additional trash has been dumped on the site. Starkey also reported Walmart has reported \$1.8 million in shoplifted items over the past year. She inquired about the permitting process needed to remove the overgrowth, so the property is visible from the street. A similar effort of tree thinning by Fish and Wildlife in 2018, along 101 South, has remained trash free.

Before moving on a vote to address this problem, the board contacted Parks and Maintenance Director Allen Winogradov about the permitting process and asked if his work schedule would permit an expedient action to

remove brush and elevate the lot to street level. Winogradov assured the board the project could be undertaken and completed in short order and there is no permitting process needed. Winogradov said the process is to speak with State Fish and Wildlife, and upon inspection of the property, with some specific do's and don'ts, Winogradov believes the property can be secured.

The vote by the board was unanimous.